



The Misiri Legend Explored

A Linguistic Inquiry into the Kalenjiin People's
Oral Tradition of Ancient Egyptian Origin

Kipkoech araap Sambu

University of Nairobi Press



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The author, Dr Kipkoech araap Sambu, 2011

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First published 2011 by
University of Nairobi Press
Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library
P.O. Box 30197 – 00100, Nairobi Kenya
Email: nup@uonbi.ac.ke | website: <http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/press>

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University of Nairobi Library CIP Data

Sambu, Kipkoech

The Misiri legend explored: a linguistic inquiry into the Kalenjiin people's oral tradition of ancient Egyptian origin / K. Sambu, –Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2011

272p

ISBN-10-9966-792-14-7

ISBN-13-978-9966-792-14-3

1. Kalenjiin community – Origin 2. Kalenjiin community – Language and languages
3. Anthropological linguistics – Kenya – Kalenjiin 4. Kalenjin community – Culture – Origin

I. Title

DT 429 .K3S3

Printed by

Sitima Printers and Stationers Ltd.
P.O. Box 53987 – 00200
Nairobi

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Abbreviations

B	Budge, E.A.W., 1920, An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary
B.Dict.	Budge, E.A.W., 1920, An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary
C	Crum, W.E. 1939. A Coptic Dictionary
Cf.	Compare/contrast with.
Crum	Crum, W.E. 1939. A Coptic Dictionary
def.	Definite
e.p.n.	Exclusive plural noun
e.s.n.	Exclusive singular noun
ed.	Editor
F.Dict.	Faulkner, R.O., 1962, Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian
GME	The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, Release 6, 1993
i.p.n.	Inclusive plural noun
i.s.n.	Inclusive singular noun
imp.	Grammatical imperative
indef.	Indefinite
Kal./Kalenj.	Kalenjiin
Mattar	N. Mattar, 1989, A Study in Bohairic Coptic
MEE	Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia, 1993–1997
n.	Noun
OIE	Oxford Interactive Encyclopedia
pl.	Plural
sing.	Singular
v.	Verb

Acknowledgements

This is the second book resulting from research work that I started twenty years ago. The first of the books resulting from this research, *The Kalenjin People's Egypt Origin Legend Revisited: Was Isis Asiis?*, was first published in 2007, and the second edition was published in 2008. There have been several reprints in between. Over that long period there have been many well wishers and active helpers without whose involvement this volume could not have reached the stage of publishing. They are too many to mention: to the majority of them I would say: please allow me to thank you in anonymity. Included among the anonymous are all the ancestors of the Kalenjin-speaking people and their descendants who have held so tenaciously to the oral tradition and kept alive the language to the extent I could compare it with various stages of the not-so-lucky, dead ancient Egyptian language.

My special thanks go to the Coptic Church and Center, Nairobi, and to the Coptic Bishop for African Affairs (lately in charge of South and West Africa), Bishop Antonious Markos, who has since transferred from Nairobi and is now serving from Johannesburg where this medical doctor-cum-cleric and master of the Coptic language, was still in place to work closely with me when I was a doctoral student at the University of South Africa. Many thanks also go to his two Nairobi priests: Fr. Poulos Sidhom, whose initial welcome and teaching of the Coptic language in 1990 was crucial to the beginning of this project; and Fr. Dr Antonious Halim, from whose personal counsel and huge library this project benefited until 1993. Thanks too to the late Professor Dr Zaki Shenouda, Director of the Institute of Coptic Studies, Cairo, Egypt, who expressed high regard for my command of the Coptic language and script and kindly granted me an interview at the papal residence, Cairo in 1993. Being the top Coptic authority at the time, his recognition boosted the confidence in me that ensured the continuation and completion of this project.

And then there are the two professors who, by dint of profession came by this work and could not rest until it was published: my doctoral thesis promoter, Professor PS Vermark of the University of South Africa, and Professor Jesse Mugambi who was then lecturing at the University of Nairobi and later the Director of Starehe Boys' Centre, Nairobi.

Many thanks also go to Mr. Sababu Shabaka of Maryland, USA, who encouraged this project from the beginning, 1990 to the temporary end, 2011, scouting for rare books, and Ms Ingrid Gaddis of California, who did the same. But so instrumental too was Kinama a'Mutungi's company at the Coptic Centre and at my home. He was there sparring with me, and urging me on, and this enabled me to continue learning a lonely, dead language!

There are, of course, my many other friends, towards whom I feel special sense of gratitude and affection for their advice, moral support and for being there when I needed them: the millions of Kass FM Radio fans who urged me on and kept asking for my books; the station's chairman, Mr. Joshua araap Chepkwony; the management under Mrs Helen Joshua and Mr. Julius Lamaon, the staff of that station as well deserve commendation for facilitating the testing of the new ideas that this project necessarily came up with, and for creating awareness of, and marketing my publications so effectively.

Special thanks go to my principal field research assistant, high school classmate, and now Dr David Kiprof araap Kolil who not only covered the widest area, often literally on foot, but was also at hand to deliberate on the contents and the physical circumstances behind the field tapes. I am gratified to learn that my own work with him partly spurred him on until he embarked on a master's degree and, finally, a doctorate.

Dr Davy Kiprotich araap Koech, urged me on, and personally helped with the immense research expenses, including air tickets to Egypt and then to Israel, accommodation, and rent, just so this work and new knowledge would be guaranteed the light of day. I thank that great lover and pursuer of knowledge many times fold and may Asiis pull him out of the problems that may have been visited upon him due to the sheer enormity and sheen of his own successes.

This work would probably have had little chance of finally seeing the light of day either had it not been for the timely intervention of the wonderful family of Harold Miller, Annetta Miller, and Keith Miller, together with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) which met the bulk of the costs of publishing the first book in the series. Keith Miller, in his home in Egypt, and even in restaurants, went about editing out my mistakes in the manuscript quite thoroughly although I take all the blame for any that he may have overlooked, or that I created since he handed the manuscript back to me.

Special thanks also go to my parents: my late father, Kipsambu araap Bargokweet and my late mother, Tapkiili nebaraap Bargokweet, for being key informants for this project. I also thank profoundly my big brother, Councillor Sambu, for taking me to school and paying for it, otherwise I would probably be just another oral author today! Our middle brother, Mr. Kimagut araap Sambu, who sponsored my journalism training some thirty-five years ago, and later encouraged and participated enthusiastically in this project, also merits a special mention. So too do the other siblings and the entire House of Pkeles.

My own immediate family bore an unquantifiable amount of sacrifice, material and psychological, over the length of time that research work and these writings of mine took to complete, for I subordinated everything to these projects, spending almost all waking moments on them. Our sons, Kipkirui araap Kiituur and Tirop araap Kiituur have kept the patience as much as keen interest in my progress thereby

boosting the morale that all authors need while they are deeply engrossed in their lonely tasks.

All that said, any errors of commission and omission that may be found here are solely my own, though certainly unintended. The safest way not to step on anyone's toes is not to walk at all, leave alone to run, but I had a message and I had to run with it and I apologise in advance to any party that may feel injured, though unwittingly on my part, by any of the contents of this book. While I subordinate diplomacy to facts whenever the two clash, all be assured that I intend no harm or slight to any person or organization.

May Asiis, to whom we are most indebted for inspiring and overseeing things up to this stage, blaze your individual paths ever so brightly as you go through the pages in the book. *Iman*.

Kipkoech araap Sambu
Washington, DC
20th December of Koitaleel 106
20th December, 2011

Introduction

The Kalenjiin people have held fast on to a tradition that their ancestors in antiquity were part of ancient Egypt, which they variously call *Tto* and *Misiri*. As unlikely as it may sound, the persistence in keeping this oral tradition alive does not seem to be dying with time and distance from the claimed place of origin. But the aura of “unlikeliness” is largely brought about by the situation on the ground in Egypt and in Kalenjiin land as things stand at the present, namely that Egypt is occupied by an Arabic-speaking lighter-skinned people who, judging from television and newspaper stories, largely resemble other people of the Middle East while the Kalenjiin are dark-skinned and resemble other Africans south of the Sahara. So, an initiate into this concept may instinctively ask, “How can a black people, who do not even profess to Islam, claim to have originated from such an Arabic, Islamic, geographical setting?” However, a mere, shallow dig back into history soon begins to reveal to such initiate that the present Egyptian population acquired the present demographic and ethnic character relatively recently, beginning around the year 640 A.D. to be more precise. So what kind of African people did the middle-eastern immigrants mix with, or displace once they became a factor in Egypt? The oral tradition of the Kalenjiin claims that their ancestors were part of that early indigenous population.

So who are the Kalenjiin? A fuller introduction, or, more accurately, a definition, is made of them in Chapter 1, but suffice it here to say that most of them are to be found in the western highlands of Kenya along the Rift Valley. Others live in the eastern districts of Uganda, while yet others live in the northeastern parts of Tanzania. Other close kin live along the border areas between and in the adjacent areas of the Sudans and Ethiopia. Most of them are either pastoralists or mixed farmers. A few scattered communities are land tillers, having taken to this latter mode of economy because they lost their cattle some generations back.

A quiet, reserved, non-assuming, almost self-effacing people, the outside world knew little about the Kalenjiin until only recently when it became known that the East Africans, who dominated the middle and long-distance athletic events globally, were all concentrated on one spot on the continent, in the country called Kenya, and all were, with pretty few exceptions, Kalenjiin. Other researchers from all over the world are now pursuing this—what appears to be a natural predisposition, which others believe is genetic while others think that it owes it to a response to, or an adaptation to an environment that is both harsh and conducive at the same time.

However, sight may not be lost of the fact that the running Kalenjiin may merely have taken full advantage of the evenness of the playing field by way of the uniform rules, the uniform distances, uniform timing, the fixed starting and finishing lines and, not least, the inexpensiveness of track events. Apart from the inexpensiveness of track events, they have been able to own and internalise

athletics fully, this being an occupation that does not require them to resort to foreign language and culture—often generally the Kalenjiin peoples’ biggest collective handicap—in order to master. Nevertheless, it remains for the authorities to recognise this fact and to attempt to achieve an all-round internalisation by introducing the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in all school level and tertiary subjects other than in the learning of foreign languages. Perhaps if equipped in this way, they might similarly attain more superlatives in other fields other than athletics. Perhaps the said handicap and the opportunity away from it apply in various degrees to all other nations as well and a national rather than regional, or ethnic, approach needs to be considered: the goal is to find unity in diversity and not to view diversity as an enemy of unity.

The interest as far as the project at hand is concerned, however, is in the Kalenjiin people’s ancient oral tradition of origin. The stated tradition, namely that they originated from Pharaonic Egypt, will be investigated scientifically and methodically in such a way that if another researcher followed the same method of inquiry, he or she would end up with more or less similar results. But this happens to be a popular emotional human story on the other hand, and so it may be appropriate to apply a spontaneous method, discussing issues that are relevant to the main theme as they fall in naturally and in a natural way. All is told, where possible, in a flowing narrative style of the informants from the oral field, with the hope that the end result will reflect a warm, connected human story, and not a boring and detached statistical tally of facts. From the facts so laid out, in most cases, fairly fast conclusions are too tempting, obvious and inevitable to draw, in others subtle; but all come best when they explode in the mind of the reader. It is, therefore, a deliberate style of the author to allow the reader to make his or her own conclusion on every major issue from the facts given.

This is a pioneering work that brings to light much new knowledge about the past and it ought to instigate educationists to embark on a major revision of the East African school syllabi, especially where they touch on Kalenjiin history, religion, other forms of culture and literature. It should spur further research as well as inspire similar researches among other communities. The students of ancient Egypt who will be humble enough to deflate their intellectual ego, accept that there is an irrational prejudice against the very concept of ancient black African ingenuity, and accept to upgrade their stock of knowledge regarding ancient Egypt with the numerous discoveries laid out here, will also discover a powerful new tool for their trade in the form of the African languages and cultures that now lie south of the Sahara. What this statement implies is that all the while, the Egyptology scholars and researchers have been depriving themselves of some of the genuine tools that would have brought greater and more final results to their investigations.

This work is also meant to contribute towards the restoration of the pride of the African in himself by bringing to him the hidden and suppressed information on his illustrious past, his historical achievements and primary contribution to science, technology and world religion: all at the founding base of what has gradually

become modern civilisation in general. Regarding the awareness of these facts, the African has been the most deprived. Yet he needs to restore his sense of worth by knowing and appreciating what he has achieved in the past if he is to perform and contribute his share of creativity to the world now and in the future. This is partly the ideal of African renaissance. The world is the poorer for lacking the unique African contribution whose capacity and potential is well demonstrated in the Egyptian antiquities. His potentially creative mind is now atrophied and literary works, such as this one, ought to wake him up from the prolonged deep slumber.

Part I is divided into four major sections comprising Chapters 1 to 4. The part discusses the cultural and historical background of the key players throughout the project—the Kalenjiin. A reasonably full definition of them is attempted. Their own story of how they migrated from settlement to settlement after departing from *Misiri*, or *Tto*, is recounted while also cross-checking such oral account against what has been written about the present inhabitants of the scattered settlements along the migratory route. This is followed by an informed speculation about the location of *Tto* in the context of modern Egypt as well as about the reasons why they left Egypt and the likely timeframe applicable to their narratives. An evaluation of some remarks from the works of others who commented on Kalenjiin migration the earliest, such as Hollis, Merker, Massam, etc., as well as of the relevant comments that one could find in archival titbits, is often resorted to.

We also revisit, quite fleetingly, the people that need introduction or definition the least, the Egyptians, ancient and modern. A rare look at the process of Arab influx following a deliberate policy of demographic alteration that changed forever the demographic profile of Egypt from a basically African nation to a nation of a predominantly cross African and Arab population, akin in most respects to the Swahili population of the East Coast of Kenya, whose history and genetic composition are beyond doubt, is facilitated.

The definition of the Egyptians is provided because there is no reason to assume that all the readers know them well enough and especially in the light of new information coming from the south, and as issues are reviewed on the basis of and with the benefit of such information. The Copts are given a mention along with their lost mother tongue, Coptic, which language is used throughout much of the remainder of the book as a most useful supporting tool.

If the traditional Kalenjiin claim that their ancestors originated from Egypt is to be seen to make sense, then a comparison of the language of the Egypt of their time of emigration from there and their present language and dialects in Eastern Africa should reveal some semblance. This is the stuff of our Parts II and III, i.e., Chapter 5, Chapter 6, and Chapter 7. These go to form our make or break spot as far as the entire theme is concerned because language is the most visible item of cultural expression and identification of man. If there is a semblance of any sort here, then our a priori position is set in place, the justification to search farther and all-round is firmly established. As Claude Lévi-Strauss (1958:68–69) has pointed out, the material out of which language is built is of the same type as the material out of

which the whole culture is built. And so, the linguistic discussion here lays foundation for the appreciation of the other equally complex structures, which correspond to the different aspects of culture. The author discusses religion, as it relates to the Kalenjiin and the ancient Egyptians, at length in his published book, *The Kalenjiin People's Egypt Origin Legend Revisited: Was Isis Asiis?* He will in subsequent publications discuss those other areas of culture such as military and warfare, and politico-administrative structures in similar comparative style and thus continue to confirm Lévi-Strauss's above-stated supposition to the effect that "the material out of which language is built is of the same type as the material out of which the whole culture is built."

Absolute care needs to be taken here, and so we apply the standards of proof that the discipline of comparative linguistics has set. The theoretical basis upon which comparative linguistics as a scientific discipline operates is discussed in detail in Part II. After establishing the standards we move on to Part III and make a detailed attempt to apply those standards to our particular comparative study. Lexicostatistical analysis that involves the comparison of linguists' traditional standard list of the basic words of language—confined to Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian in our case—is carried out with a view to establishing the genetic relationship between the two languages. Another comparative ancient Egyptian/Kalenjiin group of about 100 words, which are listed according to range of meanings, i.e., semantic domains, is added to push the case beyond reasonable doubt.

After the lexicostatistical analysis exercise, syntactic analysis, which involves the comparison of the respective grammars according to the various analytical rules from the field of comparative linguistics: word order; noun formation; gender markers; negation, etc., follows. If any two languages share features in these areas of grammar as well as in the items of basic vocabulary, then they are genetically related. It follows that the speakers of those languages too are genetically and historically related and the extent of sharing may determine the length of time that has transpired since they were one people living in one geographical setting. Linguists have applied the same techniques to determine the nature of relationship between Indo-European languages, the Semitic languages, etc. and say that there are no two ways about it and their resolve is amply tested here.

The author has indulged in an over-elaboration, if that is what it may appear to be, with evidence garnered from the aspect of language, why? This is because, all pretence to the contrary aside, there is no shortage of skeptics where an attempt is made to associate black people with ancient Egypt. It is an emotive issue. It is for this reason that the author has resorted to what may seem to be an over-elaboration from point to point, especially as to the aspects of linguistic cognateness, linguistic congruity being a difficult corner for any would-be irrational skeptic to wriggle out of.

The question may legitimately be asked as to what era of the ancient Egyptian language is being compared with the Kalenjiin language of today. First of all, the

most important books and dictionaries of ancient Egyptian language that have been used here as the key references, have generally confined themselves to Middle Egyptian language as their area of competence, but they have not restricted themselves totally to limited and particular stages in the language's development. Allan Gardiner (1927) and Raymond Faulkner (1962) respectively declare for Middle Egyptian language. However, Alan Gardiner (1927:2), while describing Middle Egyptian as the classical age of Egyptian literature, with a more consistent system of spelling, and with the greatest mass of literature available, nevertheless, covers the period between the 9th Dynasty, about 2200 BC, and the Saite Dynasties of about 500 BC—a span of 1700 years—and yet his work ranks among the top benchmarks of Egyptology. Another prolific Egyptologist, Wallis Budge, covers, in his two-volume dictionary (1920:1); an even wider span: the period between 3rd Dynasty, about 2700 BC, and Roman times—up to and including the Coptic stage—a span of 2700–3000 years.

The point being stressed here is that one is dealing with one ancient Egyptian language irrespective of its development phases, which, at any rate, are mere approximations. The Egyptian age that is being compared to modern Kalenjin in this book is, to an extent, governed by the listed major sources in their flexibility. For the purpose of the argument here, the words and grammatical characteristics that are most relevant are those that linguists consider largely impossible to drop and quite un-adoptable: the basic words of language and the basic grammar that governs their use. These are the tools and rules of expression that relate to fundamentals of life. This is to say, in other words, that we are for much of the project hovering over an unchanging area of language; an area for which time is almost irrelevant. Whenever we find a word from this objectively controlled area that corresponds to one or other from the Kalenjin lexicon, we admit it on account of the fact that it is a bona fide Egyptian lexical item, irrespective of the age, and that it is useful for the purpose of enhancing our hypothesis of a historical unity between ancient Egyptian and the Kalenjin language.

Thus, there is an argument to justify the avoidance of the practice of sticking to Egyptian of a single age or dynasty as source of comparative lexicon. Besides, the key sources themselves are liberal about it and there is no way we can do better than they on this account for as long as they will remain our key sources. It may only be expressed as a rough guide that Middle Egyptian becomes the target language stage here because the majority of the examples come from sources that expressly declare for Middle Egyptian. However, Coptic, a much later stage of Egyptian, is also employed as a most powerful comparative tool largely because of its greater orthographic accuracy.

Part II lays the theoretical ground for Part III, which applies it. A reading of this section is recommended in order to best appreciate the all-important Part III—but is not essential—except for students from the relevant disciplines, potential critics and researchers.

Introduction to Part I

Part I Chapter One, attempts to define the Kalenjiin people whose language, culture, religious aspect of life, together with the corresponding language, beliefs and practices of the ancient Egyptians, constitute the main focus of this series of books by the author insofar as they go to prove an old tradition of origin. The introduction here is, consequently, made largely in relation to their oral tradition, i.e., as part of our process of validating the tradition.

Although the Kalenjiin may be familiar, naturally to themselves, and fairly so to the other East Africans, they may not have been discussed in the context and approach adopted here in any authoritative document so far available to them. Even to those who are familiar with the Kalenjiin history, a re-introduction of the kind that follows will still be worth their while if only because the author has broken rather drastically with the traditional approaches and with many a “fact” with which they are so familiar. It goes without saying that the reader who is less acquainted with the East African literary terrain will find the introductory account even more indispensable in preparation for better appreciation of the major discussions ahead.

One of the important breaks with the literary past and present, which is played out in Chapter 2, is our readmission of and the attempt to re-interpret and rehabilitate the term “Hamite/Hamitic,” ridding it of the racial stigma that a non-scientific approach by some early western anthropologists had earned it. This is what present intellectuals contemptuously call “the Hamitic hypothesis.” The discussion on the Hamite and Hamitic issue affords us a chance to describe the Kalenjiin and the ancient Egyptians from a physical appearance point of view. The necessarily extensive arguments surrounding the controversial Hamite/Hamitic linguistic and ethnic classification also afford us an opportunity to present the “independent” outsiders’ view of the socio-cultural and physical characteristics of the Kalenjiin people as recorded during their less contaminated, socio-culturally-speaking, early parts of the Twentieth century. The “independent” commentators were the early visitors, anthropologists and colonial officers. Many of those anthropologists and colonial officers, it is admitted, may not have had the best interests of the Kalenjiin at heart, but neither were they such great liars even if racial prejudice was their major log-in-eye. With such jaundiced eye, they saw and wrote about things as they appeared to them prior to the massive disorientation by western influence and values. Therefore, none of us, despite our best intentions, can claim to “see” and “hear” better than those early commentators all of what they saw and heard at that material and eventful time, even if we took into account such great multiple handicaps as encumbered them.

After we have put the infamous “Hamitic hypothesis” in its ignominious place, to the extent that it is possible, and after, hopefully, restoring some legitimacy and honour to the terms “Hamite and Hamitic,” we make an attempt at pinpointing the actual geographical spot in Egypt that is mentioned in the Kalenjiin oral legends as the original home of the ancestors of the Kalenjiin by re-examining the place-names

that often crop up in the legends. We then compare such nomenclature to those found in the historical records of ancient Egypt together with the written works of Egyptologists, notably the eyewitness accounts of the great Greek historian, Herodotus, who visited the Egypt of the 5th century BC. We then attempt to assign a timeframe and hypothetical reasons for the proto-Kalenjiin's departure from Egypt. An extension of the discussion on place names is to be found under Appendix 1. There we relate ancient Egyptian place names to the living Kalenjiin language as a further exercise in the investigation of the Kalenjiin ancestors' claim and as an important piece of corroborative contribution to the entire enterprise of this project.

Towards the end of Part I, we involve the modern Egyptians both as a contrast to and as a continuation of the ancient Egyptians. This exercise is important because, on the surface of it, when we talk about the proto-Kalenjiin and the ancient Egyptians in the same breath, we may seem, at least to the uninitiated, to be associating together socio-cultural and genetic incompatibles: Arabs and black Africans. Because of this, we include a brief treatise on how a black African Egypt became an essentially Arab and Islamic country, which happened long after the proto-Kalenjiin had left Egypt for the South. A discussion that inevitably partly constitutes an exercise in exclusion of the later invaders, the Arabs, from the ancient Egyptian equation, is thus inescapable.

A brief history of the Coptic language is presented, this language being one of the vital instruments, alongside ancient Egyptian and Kalenjiin, whose feature of consonance enhances the legitimisation of the subject of the entire series.

Notes on transcription and a pronunciation guide are included as a smooth introduction to the linguistics based in the latter part of Part I.

CHAPTER 1

Who are the Kalenjiin?

The People

The name “Kalenjiin” refers collectively to a closely related, basically pastoral, people of the highlands of western Kenya, the Mt Elgon region of eastern Uganda, and the highlands of north-central Tanzania.¹ The various constituent sub-ethnic groups live in a diverse geographical area within and adjacent to the north-south oriented Great Rift Valley fault. Although they are historically associated with the Nile Valley, their choice of habitat here is characterised by high altitude—hence the linguists’ technical name for them: Highland Nilotes (Cf. Ehret 1971:3).

The term “Kalenjiin” also refers to the language spoken by the defined people. Each of the sub-nations speaks a distinct dialect of the one language and degrees of mutual intelligibility among these sub-nationalities vary mainly according to the distances that keep them apart. The differences in dialect are chiefly attributable to the vastness of territory and the differing influence exerted upon the respective speakers by neighbours of each sub-nation as these neighbours are bound to be different for each one of them.

The useful collective name, Kalenjiin, according to one influential source, was coined in the mid-forties by a group of students of Alliance High School.² The name Kalenjiin, as it stands, is a contraction of a complete sentence which means “I tell you,” or “I have told you...” *ka a lee nychi iin* or *ka-a-le-nchi-in(yee)*, “I have told you.” Most Kalenjiin pronounce the syllable *nch* as if it was *nj*, preferring to utter *ranj* for the English word “ranch,” for example, and the same combination in what would have been *Kaalenchiin* gave way phonetically to *Kaalenjiin*. And because of the poorly vocalised writing of the language, which practice was the order of the day for most of the 20th century, this soon gave way to the much shorter and more familiar “Kalenjin.” All Kalenjiin speakers have the habit of drawing the attention of the listener by stating “*I have told you*” each time they want to say or re-emphasise something they think must be understood.

¹ See Christopher Ehret (1971:11 map). The Kalenjiin-speaking peoples and their close kin of western Ethiopia and south-eastern Sudan are associated with land that lies over 6500 feet in elevation.

² Dr Taaita araap-Toweett in a verbal contribution to a seminar organised by The Davy Koech Foundation, Feb 1994. Those he could remember to have been together with him at Alliance High School, in that historic moment of coinage, were araap Ng’ulat, John Kotut Koitie, William Maritim, Richard Koskei, Benjamin s/o Kimnyigei, araap Seroney and a Benjamin from Nakuru.

During the colonial period and before the collective term Kalenjiin had been coined and taken root, the kindred peoples—those based in Kenya in particular—were referred to in most early colonial official documents and in the general parlance as the “Nandi-speaking peoples.” The designation “Kalenjiin,” therefore, directly replaced the “Nandi-speaking peoples.”

“Nandi-speaking” radio broadcasters, singers—notably one Wilson araap Labooso at the beginning, and later Kipchambai araap Tapotuk (both are now deceased and were from Kipsigiis)—as well as the pre-independence Kenya politicians, picked up the new coinage and, to tremendous effect, used it to rouse awareness, a sense of belonging to one family, among the kindred peoples. They drummed up the message that urged greater political and social unity among these peoples. The natural bonds, between the many constituent groups, had been ruptured chiefly by decades of foreign occupation of much of the land during the colonial era. With the new neutral unifying name, these groups began to think of themselves even more as one. Other communities began to treat and regard them as such in the course of time.

The name has been universally accepted and has stuck although it has little historical base to it. It is similar to calling the Agĩkũyũ *Atĩ -rĩ-rĩ* or the Maasai *A-tejo-maa* and the Englishmen, *I-say*, or *I-tell-you*.

The Kalenjiin names that are more steeped in history are *Sabiiny*, *Sebei*, *Sabaoot*, and *Myoot*. As evidence will show by and by, the *Sabiiny* would appear to have been part of the ancient Egyptian military clan called the Calasiries. The province of these clans of warriors referred to in Greek records of the last millennium of the BC era, as *Sebennies*, included the delta area of Egypt. The middle “finger” of the Nile where it touches the Mediterranean Sea was, in those times, called Sebennitus by the Greeks (Herodotus Book II).

Sebei is only another way of saying *Sabiiny* or *Sapiiny*. The Kalenjiin of Uganda who occupy a part of that country’s slopes of Mt. Elgon and whose larger district used to go by the same name Sebei, now Kapchorwa, generally, go by the *Sebei* version of the name.

Sabaoot is a version of the very same name, *Sabiiny*, that the Kalenjiin who occupy part of the Kenyan slopes of Mt. Elgon, collectively go by. The version *Sabaoot*, although only recently put into political use as a collective and unifying reference, also appears in ancient records in various contexts but always in relation to the military notion. “It is the descriptive name of God in Hebrew, literally meaning ‘of the armies’.” In Greek it comes in the form: *Κίριος Σαβαωθ* (*Kirios Sabaooth*), “Lord Almighty.”³

Most of the elderly Kalenjiin people interviewed by the author and by his assistants said that all Kalenjiin were called *Sabiiny* or *Sabaoot* up to Mt. Elgon from where

³ The Greek New Testament (Dictionary). United Bible Societies, 1983.

groups later fanned out in migratory patterns that gave rise to the present Kalenjiin sub-nations and their relatively new names. But the Kalenjiin sections that stayed put, at the slopes of the volcanic mass that is Mt. Elgon, retained the original name, or the different versions of it. And indeed it is natural in such situations that those who migrate find or are given new names but those who remain behind retain the old name.

Myoot was mentioned in some of the research interviews as being one of the original names for the Kalenjiin. It also exists in written records that date back to the early years of the Twentieth Century. It is used in this text interchangeably with the expression “proto-Kalenjiin.”

The author picked on *Myoot* because the equally competent Sebei, Sabiiny, or Sabaoot would bring about confusion now and then if used as a collective “proto” name for all the sub-ethnic groups. Such confusion would occur because there are sub-ethnic groups today that are still commonly known by these versions of the original name while there are others of the larger stock who are not. And, again, there may be certain sub-ethnic groups that never were Sabiiny and yet speak the Kalenjiin language. *Myoot* is free of the first malady because there is no single group that still refers to itself as *Myoot*. If there are any Kalenjiin branches that were never part of *Myoot*, they must be so small as to warrant little attention for the greater good of nomenclatural convenience.

The designation Kalenjiin continues to be used here albeit its being, historically speaking, the most incompetent of them all. It is a mere linguistic grouping terminology, but one must recognise its wide contemporary usage. It is also convenient because it encompasses all the “Kalenjiin”-speaking peoples in this part of Africa. Some of them, e.g. the Barabaig, the Ogieek (Dorobo), and others, may not have been among the Sabiiny (Sebei or Sabaoot). The latter are those that, for a time, inhabited the slopes of Mt. Elgon before branching out into the major sub-ethnic groups of today in a gradual expansion process that began almost five centuries ago or, as the elderly informants would put it: “The age-set cycle has rolled four times since.” A full cycle ideally takes 120 years.

The main body of the vast and diverse Kalenjiin community is to be found in Kenya. It comprises the following sub-ethnic groups: Kipsigiis, Nandi, Tugen, Keiyo, Pokoot, Merkweeta (and Eendo, Almo, Kiptani, Barokot, and Sengwer [Kipkorir, 1971]), Sabaoot clusters (Koony, Sapiiny, Pook, and the Pong’omeek) of Mt. Elgon area, Terik and Ogieek (Dorobo).

As already mentioned, there are many Kalenjiin sub-ethnic groups outside of Kenya. In Tanzania, we find a significant concentration in the district of Mbulu. But there are many clusters of tiny populations outside this district farther west and south—some of them facing extinction as entities distinct from their Bantu-speaking neighbours. These Tanzanian Kalenjiin speakers are collectively referred to officially as Barabaig, although this is a designation relevant to only one group. The more appropriate collective name for them would probably be Tatoog, or

Datoog, which also appears in Tanzanian records. Tatoog or Datoog would seem to suggest “the people of Tto” which, as we have noted above, probably translates to modern Abusir in Egypt. The name Datoog, or Tatoog, would also seem to tally with the name of one of the more remotely related (to the Kalenjiin) group still living in old Burgei, i.e. northeast of Lake Turkana, called the Dathanaik.

The Barabaig may be another former member of the Calasiri military wing, as listed by Herodotus, the Greek visitor to Egypt of 500 BC. He mentioned the Pharbaithis alongside the Sebbenies and others. Some of these Tanzanian Kalenjiin speakers were the people who were briefly studied at the close of the Nineteenth Century by the German ethnologist, Merker, who concluded in his book, *Die Masai*, that they were a most pure race that was representative of the ancient Egyptians.⁴ The Barabaig and their kin speak a probable dialect of ancient Egyptian akin to Kalenjiin, observe most Kalenjiin customs and have therefore duly been classified here under Kalenjiin.

The Kalenjiin of Kenya refer to all Tanzanian non-Ogieek Kalenjiin people as *Mang’orori* and believe that they migrated from Kenya to Naata (Mainland Tanzania) as a result of pressure from the later waves of incoming Kalenjiin as well as in adventure. The more likely scenario, however, is that the Barabaig were cut off from the rest of the Kalenjiin in Kenya and driven south deep into what is now mainland Tanzania by the Maasai hundreds of years ago.

The other “Barabaig” are Gisamjeng, Iseimajeg, Rudageing (these two live in Ruwana Valley of Musoma area), Buradig, Bajud and Dororojeg of the plains running south along the Sibiti River from Lake Eyasi. There are also the Ghumbieg, Mangadg, Reimojig, Daragwajeg, and Bianjid, who extend along the Wembere River in Singida area as far as Itigi (Ehret 1971:3–6).

These people are apparently grossly under-enumerated given the area they cover and the number of independent units. The official Barabaig tally for 1969 Tanzania Census was only 48,000. At the rate of 26 per cent increase per decade—which is the estimate for other less fertile Kalenjiin—they should now (2011) number around 133,000 souls. But, as with the rest of the nomadic/pastoral peoples, the Barabaig are bound to suffer under-enumeration in census after census.

The Sebei area of eastern Uganda, as mentioned above, is home to the Sapiiny or Sabiiny, Mbai and Sor Kalenjiin who also exist in these independent subdivisions but are officially collectively referred to as *Sebei*.

Considerable numbers, although rather more distant—linguistically and geographically—of kin communities are to be found in the eastern Sudan and western Ethiopia. They were formerly generally referred to as Shanqilla (Bender 1975), some being suggestive of a cross between Maasai, Kalenjiin, and Luo linguistically and culturally. They could fall into any of these classificatory

⁴ Merker refers to these people as Semites. The original Semites in Merker’s view were black people (1904:ch.1).

groupings, and a few are listed here with that caution in mind: Nyangatom, Anywa, Kunama, Muguj, Bari, northern Lang'o, and *Ingassana*. Ethiopia's (also Kenya's) Nyangatom and Anywa, as well as Ingassana of Sudan, appear to be closer linguistically to the Kalenjin proper. Ingassana is a conglomeration of small Hamitic-speaking groups of whom the early anthropological couple, C.G. and Brenda Seligman (1932:429), say do not call themselves any name in particular. The collective name Ingassana, a term attributed to the Arabs, means "thankless ones" because they had initially rejected Islam—Lionel M. Bender (1975). *Ingasana* is a Kalenjin word meaning "village," now more often pronounced *inganasa*. Sir Claud Hollis who, as mentioned already, studied the Nandi during the twentieth century, found the Nandi pronouncing the word *ingasana* and he duly listed it that way in the "Nandi Vocabulary" section of his book. The various constituent groups of Ingassana call themselves *Jok Tan*, *Jok Kuthulok*, *Jok Gor*, etc.

Judging from the kinship terms, language, and various customs listed by the Seligmans (1932) and Bender (1975), one can say that if there were any community or communities that represented a linguistic midpoint between the mainstream Kalenjin, Maasai, and Luo, they are the Ingassana and the Lang'o of Sudan; the Anywa and the Majang' of Ethiopia.

The largest single Kalenjin sub-nation is the Kipsigiis group. The larger numbers of them live in the Kericho and Bomet counties. At an estimated population strength of about 2,000,000,⁵ the Kipsigiis comprise about forty per cent of the entire Kenyan Kalenjin population. All the Kipsigiis, living in the the twin counties, and beyond, speak one uniform dialect. That degree of dialectal homogeneity that spans such vast territorial space is not matched anywhere else within the Kalenjin homeland.

In the numerical pecking order, at an estimated 1,000,000⁶, the vastly more famous Nandi come a distant second. The smallest Kalenjin sub-ethnic group could be any one of the many tiny independent communities that live in small locations attached to the larger counties that are dominated by one or the other of the major Kalenjin sub-nations.

The 2009 national census indicates a total Kalenjin population of 4.96 million. For reasons of similarities in martial inclination, socio-cultural and economic practices and, to a considerable degree, language, the Maasai (including the Samburu) are often psychologically lumped together with the Kalenjin by other communities. Indeed over twenty per cent of the basic vocabulary (Cf. Ehret, 1971:29), and much of the basic structure of language, are shared between the Kalenjin and this grouping. The Teso and the Turkana, who speak what is virtually one common language, are also included in this psychological—and often political—union.

⁵ This is an estimate based on the 2009 national census.

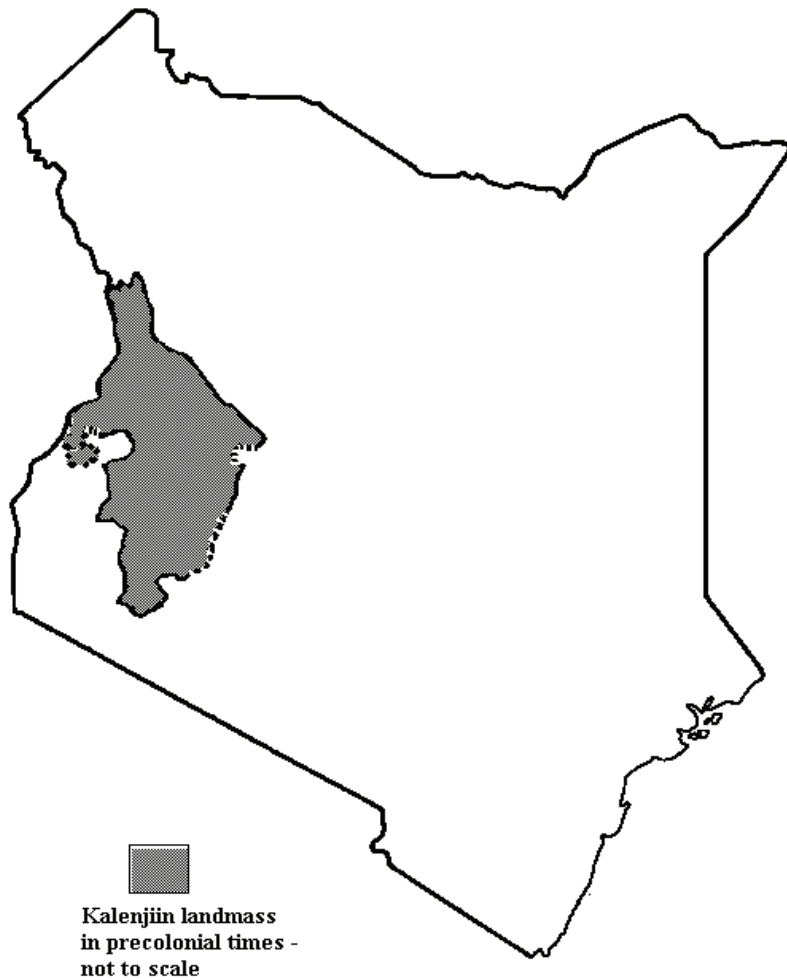
⁶ Estimate based on the 2009 national census.

All the latter peoples, being Hamitic-speakers like the Kalenjiin, have a great deal in common with the Kalenjiin linguistically and socio-culturally and, two thousand or more years ago, may have actually been one. For that reason, a lot of Maasai, Samburu, Teso, and Turkana cultural aspects, have been included in support of the general theme of this series.

These kin of the Kalenjiin in Kenya together total about 2.4 million as per the 2009 national census report. However, the census result was largely contested and discredited and the Turkana tally of 988,592 has been all but dismissed by its authors who intended to go back and repeat the exercise. The census result was not in keeping with previous demographic characteristics when the registered voting population was compared to the general population. Since independence, this has maintained a general characteristic of 1:4, i.e., for every one registered voter there are 4 who are not registered. Having registered about two million voters in 2009, the total Kenyan Kalenjiin population would suggest a number closer to eight million and not five million or so that the census result indicates. Going by this logic the total Kenyan population that produced about 12.5 million registered voters would stand at about fifty million. This suggests that a gross national under enumeration took place during the 2009 national census effort. A more conservative method though is to use the official total national population of 38.6 million and the registered voter population of 12.5 million. This gives us a ratio of 1:3 and the approximately 2 million Kalenjiin registered voting population would then suggest an overall population of 6 million souls in 2009.

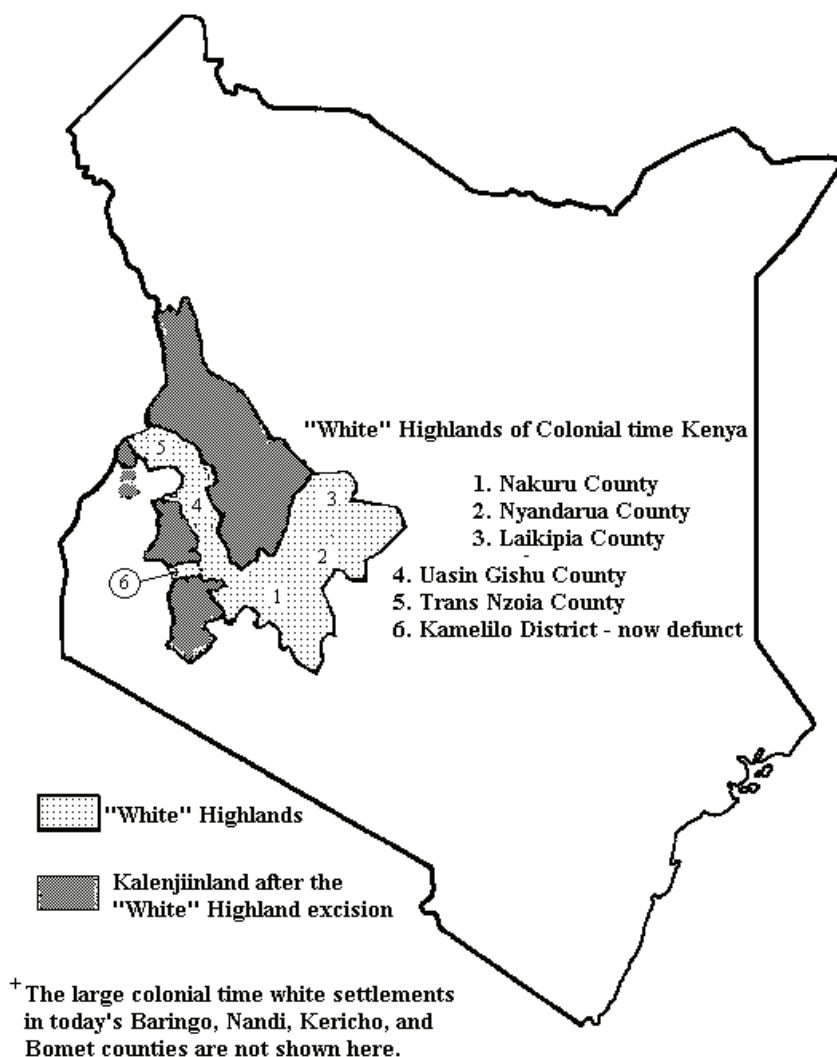
The population in Kenya touched on most by this work may have been about 7.7 million in 2009, working from the 2009 disputed census result. Until very recently they were classified by linguists, historians, and anthropologists, as Nilo-Hamites. But *Hamite* is a heavily laden and controversial, often unpopular, term. The following chapter attempts to define and redefine it.

It is worth noting that the Maasai, Samburu and Turkana, were referred to by the authoritative *Weekly Review*, as “natural allies” of the Kalenjiin (issue dated September 27th 1991). A new acronym, probably meant to be derogatory by groups outside the indigenous pastoralist Rift Valley communities, has been doing the rounds: KAMATUSA: Kalenjiin, Maasai, Turkana, and Samburu (the Teso are often forgotten for some reason, probably because, unlike all the former, they do not live in the Rift Valley region. They are in Western Province). However, there is a Kalenjiin term for all the pastoral peoples: *porop*, or *poropeek*. Perhaps it would be politer to use such an indigenous collective reference to the pastoralist grouping.



Map 1: Pre-colonial Kalenjin landmass shown on a modern Kenya map

Note the unity and continuity of the single landmass before the expropriation of what became the “White” Highlands early in the 20th Century. The saw-toothed edges indicate approximate, or unknown (to the author) boundaries. The then diminishing presence of Ogieek Kalenjin in what is today’s Central Kenya and parts of Maasailand, is not indicated here.



Map 2: Kalenjin landmasses during the colonial period

The "White Highland" belts along the railway lines so effectively split the people physically and socially that they seem to have come to accept the seeming separate identities as an old reality that had arisen from (largely imaginary) quarrels among the ancestors. The true quarrel with the colonising power that resulted in the occupation—and thus the split—seems to have faded out of the people's collective memory.

CHAPTER 2

The Hamite Factor

Definition and Overview

The close to 8 million people in Kenya, whom we shall call Hamitic speakers, and soon attempt to justify the term, together with millions more in eastern Uganda, eastern parts of the Sudans, western Ethiopia and northern Tanzania, are the people referred to here variously as the: Hamites, Nilo-Hamites, Highland Nilotes and Plains Nilotes. Another major branch of the Nilotes has been baptised by the latter-day anthropologists River/Lake Nilotes and comprise: the Luo, the Acholi, the Dinka, etc.

All the foregoing linguistic and ethnic labels are, however, the inventions and re-inventions of visiting anthropologists and linguists to the exclusion of the Africans themselves. Nevertheless, it is clear that “Nile” remains the common strain that runs through all these labels except when we talk of the Hamites without reference to “Nile.” But strictly speaking, there is no Hamite who is not originally of the Nile Valley.

The following discussion incorporates the issue of race. Under other circumstances, such a divisive issue as race by the excuse and convenience of which Africa and the Black Diaspora have suffered in the hands of invaders, colonisers and slavers, would not be discussed in a serious work of a black person whose focus did not include such racial abuse. But there are two important reasons why the “race-based” discussion is necessary at this stage:

- (1) The author is virtually going against the new intellectual grain and trend by seeking to readmit and use the adjective “Hamitic” with reference to the languages of the Kalenjin and kin. A thorough discussion that seeks to put in perspective such an indispensable yet potentially alienating terminology is, therefore, called for and will shortly be entered into.
- (2) Many people have grown up with the misleading picture of Hamites—namely, that these were white or light-skinned people—and would instinctively consider the use of the term “Hamite,” or its derivative “Hamitic,” in relation to the Kalenjin and kin, awfully dissonant with the “facts” as they know them, and to be in outright bad taste.

We must stress here that the term “Hamite” from the point of view of some of its chief abusers and purveyors—the early western anthropologists—first and

foremost, meant and referred to those Africans who appear to us to project (and history as well as geography support it), European and Asian admixture. However, the term “Hamite” is misapplied as far as it is used to describe such an obvious hybrid product solely. Easily obtainable facts shall in due course put that misnomer to deserved shame.

To intuition, the modern populations of Egypt and most of the rest of North Africa reflect the mixture of black African blood with European and Arab blood in varying proportions. The original Negro or Hamite, that is, the black African, has been diluted a great deal. The same has happened also to Mediterranean European populations; they appear to intuition to have imbibed a good deal of black African and west Asian blood in general. As a result, these Caucasians have ended up with darker skin and finer features than is characteristic of their northern kin who lack the African input.⁷

According to Herodotus, 5th century BC, during his lifetime there were black people living in and around the Colchis, i.e. the general area to the east of the Black Sea and in other parts. Because black people are no longer in those areas of south-eastern Europe, but in their place we find dark-skinned Europeans with black hair and facial features suggestive of African input, we must infer, with justification, that intermarriage took place, absorbing and altering Herodotus’ black Colchians. It is apparently with this modified southern species of European in mind that Seligman (1966:62), surmises as follows in his *Races of Africa*.

“The Hamites—who are ‘Europeans’, i.e. belong to the same great branch of mankind as the whites—are commonly divided into two great branches, Eastern and Northern.

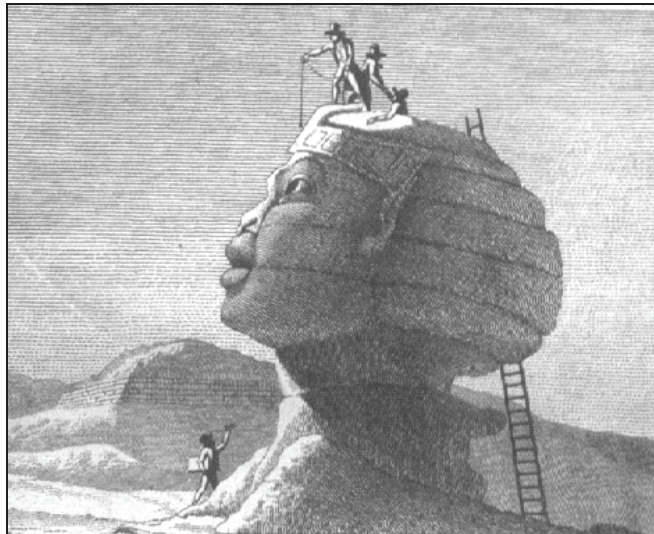
- (1) “The Eastern Hamites comprise the ancient and modern Egyptians (in the latter case recognising the infusion of foreign blood in the upper classes), the Beja, the Berberines (Barabra or Nubians), the Galla, the Somali, the Danakil, and (though mixed with Semites and Negroes) most Ethiopians.
- (2) “The Northern Hamites include the Berbers of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, Tunisia, and Algeria (often conventionally distinguished as Libyans), the Berbers of Morocco, the Tuareg and Tibu of the Sahara, the Fulbe of Western Sudan, and the extinct Guanche of the Canary Islands.”

Perhaps the remarks about the Copts, apparently the most mixed race of modern Egypt, made by another western scholar, Volney, in his *Travels in Syria and in Egypt*, 1787, are more exact in this respect and less contentious than Seligman’s:

“They all have a bloated face, bulging eyes, a flat nose, thick lips, in short, a real mulatto face. I was tempted to attribute it to the climate but after I had been to see the Sphinx, its looks provided me with a clue to the enigma. In seeing this typically Negro face in every respect, I remembered that

⁷ Read Herodotus’ own observation from his *Histories*, Book II, further on.

remarkable passage by Herodotus in which he said: ‘For me, I consider that the Colchians are a colony of Egyptians because like them, they have black skin and frizzy hair,’ which means that the ancient Egyptians were real blacks of the same stock as all indigenous Africans” (Volney, 1787:74—Diop, 1996:122).



Picture 1: The famous Sphinx of Giza, Egypt, exactly as seen by Napoleon Bonaparte and his artists who sketched it in 1798, eleven years after his fellow French man, Volney’s observation (Volney, 1787:74—Diop, 1996:122). Here excited Frenchmen are taking measurements after climbing to the top of the Sphinx’s head on a tall ladder. Thought to resemble one of the Pharaohs, Chephren, of 4,500 years ago, the Sphinx has been deteriorating over the years and, at this rate, this most African of faces, the strongest reminder of the looks of the population of its time, will cease acting as a reminder of that era. The loss of much of the nose is blamed on a Mameluke ruler (Mamelukes ruled 1250–1517 AD) who made it a habit to use the Sphinx as a shooting target. However, this does not explain why most other important monuments have their noses broken, while their more delicate parts, like ears, remain intact—Picture from “*Archaeology*,” May/June 1999.

In the following discussion, the classificatory terminologies *Negro* and *Negroid*, which were much abused and thus now may be considered offensive, depending on context, will crop up now and then owing to the inevitable presence of extensive quotation from early western sources which use them. So will the ethnic and linguistic terminology “Bantu” whose abuse and subsequent dislike was, and is still, confined to South Africa but which terminology is accepted with pride elsewhere in Africa as an accurate linguistic—as opposed to racial—classification.⁸

⁸ With reference to the South African setting in particular: no offence is meant by constantly resorting to the term “Bantu” in this work instead of using the new, less-known *Kintu* or *Isintu* terms. For an example, Canonici uses the new term *Kintu* in his PhD thesis (1995), while Mr. Hlengwa (personal communication) of the University of Natal and many of his colleagues prefer *Isintu*, which is the same word from the Zulu—or Nguni—angle. Following their example, and in deference to local sensibility, the author used the term *Kintu* in his doctoral thesis because the work was completed in South Africa and submitted to a South African University. This book is, however, meant for wider reading and the author sees the need to revert to convention.

The term “Bantu” is understood to refer to the language as well as to the linguistic grouping of the communities over much of sub-Saharan Africa who speak various independent but related forms of that super-language whose prominent linking word is *NTU*. *Ntu*, or variations of it, is the common root of the word meaning “person” throughout the related languages and dialects that are grouped under Bantu by linguists. Thus we have: *mu-ntu mu-ndu*, *omu-ntu*, meaning “person” or “a person,” and *a-ndu*, *aba-ntu*, *ba-ntu* for “people” or “the people.” Bantu is, therefore, an authentic African word and is a decent terminology that East Africans whose languages are grouped under the Bantu classification are proud and happy to go by. However, the same word was so abused in the apartheid era South Africa that, understandably, it is still considered highly offensive there. In fact *The Oxford Dictionary* has gone ahead to tag it as an “often offensive” word. The term got stigmatised partly because the successive apartheid governments had qualified any facility, thought and meant to be inferior, “Bantu.” Thus we had Bantu Education, Bantu Homelands, Bantu Quarters, etc., all characterised by depravity.

The “Bantu” term is indeed superfluous in South Africa owing to the fact that most of the black people speak various dialects and forms of the Bantu speech. However, in East Africa, the term is indispensable because there are many other languages that do not fall under the Bantu linguistic classification and indeed have little in common with the Bantu super-language. Thus in East Africa we have such major African language classifications as: Nilotic, Cushitic, Hamitic, etc. besides Bantu. Linguists, anthropologists and historians would, therefore, not manage to discuss their respective disciplines at all in the East African context were they to be deprived of the use of such linguistic classificatory terms, Bantu included.

The attempt by certain scholars to draw a “racial” map of Africa by applying the variables Bantu, Negro, Hamites, Semites, Sudanics, and Bushman (e.g. Seligman 1930 rev.1966), seems to have failed owing to the fact, which they appear not to acknowledge, that all indigenous Africans are members of one major race whose physical variations are analogous to the internal physical variations found in Asia, Europe and elsewhere. These variations are within a range and that range is socially and geographically characteristic of a continuum and not of a dichotomy. All the indigenous “races” of Africa differ a lot more with Europeans and Asians than they differ among themselves.

If a racial group can be defined as “a group of peoples who have certain well-marked physical characters in common” (Seligman, 1966:4), then all indigenous Africans form one race chiefly characterised by: woolly black hair of various texture—but never straight; brown, dark-to-black skin; full lips; relatively broader noses of various shapes—but neither hooked nor thin and long even when not so broad.

Albert Mosley’s (1997:103) idea of race concurs with that of the author:

“A population definition of race does not assume that there is any one trait or set of traits that each black or white person must have. In fact, in a

representative sample of black people, many might lack one or more of the traits deemed typical for black people. It is this kind of variation that the populational concept of race countenances and leads us to expect. In every population, there is variation. A race is simply a particular population of human beings that shows a higher frequency of certain typical traits than another group. But none of these traits are in themselves racial traits.”

Early western anthropologists, beginning from B. Struck, 1911—to whom the origin of the term “Nilo-Hamites” could be traced (Cf. Bender, 1975 various)—and including the colonial administrators, classified the Kalenjin and kin as Nilo-Hamites. The Nilo-Hamitic family of languages was, in turn, considered a member of the larger Nilo-Saharan, or Nilo-Sahelian linguistic super-phylum. That super-phylum in the words of Greenberg (1963:130) is “focused on the White Nile from Uganda to Egypt, and the Blue Nile in the Ethio-Sudan border area, with a westward extension across the Sahara (and adjoining Sahel belt) as far as Mali.”

The coining of the term “Nilo-Saharan” is attributed to the American linguistics expert Greenberg (1963:130), while the term “Nilotic” was introduced by the German explorer J. Ludwig Krapf in 1850. The Maasai type of Nilotic languages were grouped together under the term “Nile languages” in 1868 by Friedrich Muller and the Kalenjin language’s membership of it was recognised by Ernst von Hohnel in 1890. The grouping of the Kalenjin languages, Tatoog included, under “Southern Nilotic,” is attributed to Oswin Köhler (Cf. Distefano, 1985:32).

A further distinguishing linguistic idiosyncrasy between the Kalenjin type of languages and the Maasai type of languages, on the one hand, and the Luo, Acholi, Shilluk type, etc. on the other, was realised by the early linguistic scholars of Eastern African languages. That was when those western scholars classified the Kalenjin/Maasai types “Nilo Hamitic.” The “Hamitic” tag was appended because these languages were thought to be a mixture of Nilotic and Hamitic (ancient Egyptian type) languages. The linguistic pair, A.N. Tucker and M.A. Bryan shared this view, as did G.W.B. Huntingford before them (Cf. Distefano, 1985:33).

Seligman (1966:102) for his part, tried to describe and contextualise geographically and historically the people, culture, and the language that he and fellow western anthropologists had persisted in calling “Nilo-Hamites” and “Nilo-Hamitic”:

“The Nilo-Hamites are limited to East Africa and East Central Africa. They occupy much of Kenya, with that part of Uganda which runs northwards to the Sudan boundary, as well as some of the northern portion of Tanzania... They have arisen as the result of the mixture of Hamite with Negro, and as the name implies, they have a considerable amount of Hamitic ancestry, i.e. definitely more than almost all the Bantu and Nilotes. This relative preponderance of the Hamitic side of their ancestry is reflected alike in speech, appearance, and culture. They all speak languages of Nilotic type, and although their skins are dark, their faces are generally Negroid rather than Negro, the difference being especially obvious in the nose. Culturally, they are predominantly pastoralists...”



Picture 2: A bust of “goddess” Hathor, carved on both sides of this slip of wood from Gurob. It dates to the 18th or 19th Dynasty (1550–1200 BC). From such images, we can get an idea of what the Egyptians of the time looked like. Picture from *Biblical Archaeologist*/December 1984 (UC.16759).



Picture 3: Isis, who was worshiped in Egypt for many thousands of years BC and well into the early Christian Egypt, parts of Asia, and Europe. This ancient portrait, which was carved in black granite, is included here so that it may objectively and accurately illustrate the concept of the ancient black Egypt that this book partly bases its authority on. The ancient Egyptians, like most others, perceived and portrayed their deity and saints in their own likeness—*Museum of Egypt, Cairo. Picture by the author*



Picture 4: Head of Athena the Greek Goddess of the cities, arts, industry, wisdom and war. During the dying years of Isis worship in Egypt, Western Asia, and Europe, Athena was a contemporary goddess. It is clear here that as the black people of ancient Egypt portrayed their Isis in their likeness, so did the white people of the Greek lands portray their Athena in their own likeness—*picture acquired through the Israel Museum, Jerusalem - Israel Antiquities Authority.*

In Seligman's time, and throughout the intellectual reign of the western anthropologist in Africa—which extended from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth centuries—Africa's population was seen in terms of the reduced list of variables that they called Hamite, Negro, and the supposed mixture of the two. The supposed mixtures were in turn further re-classified depending on the perceived preponderance of one chief variable over the other. We have seen the definition of "Hamite" and "Nilo-Hamite" according to them—and we will come across it several times in the following pages. But the definitions can only be understood if their description of the other supposed chief variable, *Negro*, can be comprehended:

"According to Haddon, the main physical characters of the true Negro are a black skin, spiralled hair, a tall structure averaging about 68 inches, moderate dolicocephaly (average cephalic index 74–75), a flat broad nose, thick and often everted lips, and frequently a considerable degree of prognathism... The true Negro is mainly confined to the neighbourhood of the Guinea coast, including Nigeria and the Western Sudan, with some part of the Cameroons and perhaps the Congo. The rest of Negro Africa consists of Negroes hamiticized to a varying extent: on the one hand the Bantu, on the other the Nilotes and 'Nilo-Hamites'" (Seligman, 1966:31, 32).

Of late, however, many black intellectuals have been trying to fight the word "Hamite." Among the leaders are the Afro-centric works edited by Ivan van Sertima (*Journal of African Civilizations*) and those edited by Amon Saba Saakana of Karnak House while Prof. H. Mwanzi in his *A History of the Kipsigiis* 1977, made an effort to demonstrate that African civilisation and influence, far from moving from north to south of the continent, actually began in the south, then moved northwards. His model has the Bantu-speaking Gusii people "civilising" a forest-dwelling hunter-gatherer people who then come out of the forests into the open and, voila! there materialised the Kipsigiis! Later, it would take an American doctoral student, Distefano (1985), to come all the way and blast, quite successfully, gaping holes through Mwanzi's claim that the Kipsigiis resulted from a fusion between the Ogieek hunter-gatherers and the Abagusii.

One reason black intellectuals have been trying to fight the word "Hamite" has been that they dislike its purported linkage to Ham who is assigned a scandalous role in the Bible. Another major reason why the black scholars have come to detest the designation Hamite has had a great deal to do with what has been called "Hamitic hypothesis." This was characterised by the assumption on the part of certain early white anthropologists and colonial administrators (e.g. Emin Pasha, Sir Harry Hamilton Johnson and most prolifically C.G. Seligman)⁹ that much of civilisation came from Egypt to the rest of Africa to the south. This assumption contended that the conveyors of the civilisation were light-skinned Egyptian natives who came and dominated the black-skinned southern peoples in all spheres. The most visible example given was that of the Hima and the Tutsi ruling classes of parts of Uganda,

⁹ Emin Pasha in *Central Africa*, 1888. Sir Harry Johnson, *The Uganda Protectorate*, ii, 1902:616—Seligman, 1932:4.

Rwanda and Burundi, who evidently possess one physical trait or other that is associated, if ambiguously, with the Caucasian stock (Cf. Berger, 1980:68).

The personification of the “Hamitic hypothesis” was the work of Seligman who, with nothing to support the claim, would make such a far-reaching statement as this:

“Indeed it would not be very wide of the mark to say that the history of Africa south of the Sahara is no more than the history of the permeation through the ages, in different degrees and at various times, of the Negroes and the Bushmen by Hamitic blood and culture. The Hamites were, in fact, the great civilising force of black Africa from a relatively early period, the influence of the Semites being late and in the main confined to the ‘white’ areas north of the Sahara inhabited by Hamitic peoples.” (Seligman 1966:8).

The above statement was written by Seligman in 1930.¹⁰ But his categorical claim that the ancient Egyptians were ‘white’, goes against the archaeological observations of Batrawi (1946) and others and, most importantly, against the observations of an eyewitness: the man who personally came into physical contact and interacted with the ancient Egyptians and personally wrote unambiguously about the encounter: Herodotus. Herodotus (Book II), as we read earlier in a piece written by Volney, was trying to explain the origin of a certain people called the Colchians, who lived near the eastern shore of the Black Sea in the present day Republic of Georgia when he said:

“For it is plain to see that the Colchians are descended from the Egyptians; and this that I say I myself noted before I heard it from others. When I began to think on this matter, I enquired of both peoples; and the Colchians remembered the Egyptians better than the Egyptians remembered the Colchians; the Egyptians said that they held the Colchians to be part of Sesostri’s army... My own idea on the subject was based first on the fact that they have black skins and woolly hair (not that that amounts to much, as other nations have the same), and secondly, and more especially, on the fact that the Colchians, the Egyptians, and the Ethiopians are the only races which from ancient times have practised circumcision... The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine acknowledge of themselves that they learnt the custom from the Egyptians, and the Syrians of the Valleys of Thermodon and the Porthereus, as well as their neighbours the Merones, say they learnt it lately from the Colchians... “But as to the Egyptians and Ethiopians themselves I cannot say which nation learnt it from the other for it is manifestly a very ancient custom.”¹¹

On the question of the physical attributes of the ancient Egyptians, it is futile to try and contradict Herodotus owing to his privileged position as an eyewitness and

¹⁰ The book quoted, *Races of Africa*, was first published in 1930. The fourth edition, which is the copy used by this author, was published posthumously in 1966.

¹¹ Sesostri being mentioned here is likely to be Sesostri I who reigned 1962–1928 BC. Others of the same name, II and III were kings of the 12th Dynasty (2000–1750 BC—MEE 98/16).

owing to his consistency. We would be going against all the rules of intellectual honesty and fairness if we persisted in doing so.

In another reference to the black pigmentation of the ancient Egyptians, Herodotus is attempting to trace back to Egypt some two priestesses whom he says were stolen from Egypt by Phoenicians long before his own time. One priestess, it was said, was sold to Libya, and the other to Greece. The two priestesses built oracles to their “god,” Amon, while in slavery in their separate destinations abroad. Herodotus tries to link the one that went to his Greek homeland to the myth regarding a female black dove that came to Greece (or what it was then), and ordered the building of an oracle to Zeus (Amon). Herodotus (*Histories* Book II) believed that this mythological black “dove” was the Egyptian priestess: “For how could a dove utter the speech of men?” he wrote, “The tale that the dove was black signifies that the woman was Egyptian.”

The English editor, or the translator of Herodotus’ *Histories*, A.D. Godley, 1921, seems to agree with Herodotus as in a footnote follow-up, there is a remark, “Perhaps Herodotus’ explanation is right.”

According to more recent findings, the “Hamitic hypothesis” was wrong in ascribing the source of all African civilisation, physical and social, to the north of the continent in general and to Egypt in particular. Martin Bernal, who is not one of the protesting black intellectuals, but a white descendant of the Semites, who are sometimes given credit for initiating the Egyptian civilisation, concedes as follows in his *Black Athena*: “Egyptian civilisation is clearly based on the rich pre-dynastic cultures of upper Egypt and Nubia, whose African origin is uncontested” (1987:15).

But if one went by the opinions of Seligman—one of the architects of the “Hamitic hypothesis” who could only see civilisation moving in one direction—south the ancient Egyptians did not originate from the south and neither did their civilisation; rather their civilisation, as their supposedly Caucasoid Hamitic blood did (1934:3) filtered southwards. Some of that civilisation’s important stopping points were Kerma, Meroe and Soba, of which he says,

“A bastard Egyptian civilisation existed at Kerma in the neighbourhood of the third cataract during the twelfth dynasty (approx. 1991 BC); indeed, there is evidence that the site was occupied as early as the sixth dynasty (approx. 2345–2181 BC). During the next thousand years or so, it spread southward and gave rise to the hybrid Meroitic civilisation, whose southern bastion was the great city of Soba on the Blue Nile, a few miles south of Khartoum... We can scarcely doubt that a number of the traits common to ancient Egypt and our Eastern area arose in Egypt and were passed on to the negroid tribes of the Nile Valley and the Negroes of the Congo” (Seligman, 1934:12&13).

We have seen, especially from reading the unaltered first-hand evidence of Herodotus, that the “Hamitic hypothesis” was misled in its assumption that the Hamitic peoples from the north were light-skinned and Caucasoid in other respects too. The Tutsi and their relatives may well exhibit such characteristics owing to the

Semitic blood that they might have picked while still in Ethiopia, their self-acknowledged probable cradle-land. But the genuine Hamitic-speaking peoples, the Maasai, the Kalenjin, the Turkana, the Teso, and others in the Sudans, Uganda and Ethiopia, are some of the blackest people in Africa, which phenomenon Seligman himself thinks constitutes an irony. He concedes: "Yet, strangely enough, it is these mixed tribes that exhibit the darkest skins, and, in spite of the moderate stature of most Hamites, the tallest stature" (Seligman, 1932:3).

The Hamitic-speakers' somatic profile, although it may be distinct in comparison with that of other African groups, just as each group possesses its own unique characteristics, is not Caucasoid by any stretch of imagination. Black Africa contains a variety of distinct "racial" stocks like any other continent and the Hamitic-speakers represent just one of the varieties. Archaeological facts plus eyewitness accounts, which are quoted elsewhere in this chapter, confirm that the ancestors of the Hamitic speakers who were native to Egypt were not derived from prehistoric Caucasians who came to Africa. The explicit and implied erroneous assumption to the contrary by Seligman (1932), Johnson (1902), Emin Pasha (1888), and others, is part of what contributed to the later stigmatisation of the so-called "Hamitic hypothesis" in the eyes of today's black intelligentsia. But we can see that one of the initial false steps was taken when the physically, partly Cushitic Tutsi people were labeled Hamites. Their aristocratic position in the Great Lakes area of Africa had also mesmerised the white scholars so much so that they assumed this to be characteristic of the rest of the entire region.

Indeed, the anthropological and historiographic works of early colonial administrators contributed much to the confusion from the beginning and this has finally led to the distaste for the term "Hamite" among many black intellectuals. Being of Caucasian extraction themselves, the early visiting scholars and colonial administrators probably considered their conquest of Africa a manifestation of their supposed racial superiority over the black race and not one of technological superiority, which it certainly was. They then psychologically—and officially in some cases—rearranged all "races" in a pecking order with themselves at the head. Any group that they thought—often debatably—resembled them was placed higher up but emphatically below them. This was one of the obvious follies that were later to contribute to the said black intelligentsia's distaste for the term "Hamite". Western visitors considered the Nilotic-speaking blacks "almost Caucasian" physically and in the process of interacting between the groups, promoted the myth of relative superiority and inferiority all around. Some Nilotic-speaking groups, or those of apparent Nilotic origin, who no longer spoke a Nilotic language, such as the Bantu-speaking Bahima and Tutsi, seem to have bought into the folly and hence the position in which things are now. To explain this further, a journal compilation by Felix Fundi, a Rwandese diplomat in South Africa, puts it this way:

"(Nineteenth century) Europeans had never seen such a well-organised kingdom in Africa, so they assumed that the (Tutsi) people of Rwanda must have come from another continent, that they were, in fact, Hamites from Egypt. THIS WAS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS GENOCIDE (where

approximately 1,000,000 Tutsi and a few Hutu sympathisers were killed by the hitherto lowly placed Hutu in 1994)... As a matter of policy, the first Europeans to arrive in Rwanda assigned the Tutsis a genetic superiority over all tribal groups in Rwanda. Together, the colonialists and the missionaries exploited the Hamitic myth and the myth of Tutsi superiority to colonise and evangelise the Rwandan people. This reliance on Tutsi (as rulers)... was also based on an erroneous conviction propagated by the writings of missionaries which stated that the Tutsi were better suited to rule than Hutus. To their own detriment, this was a conviction that some Tutsis themselves ended up believing.”

Julian Baldick, citing Alex de Waal (‘The genocide state’ in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1st July, 1994, pp 3–4), notes that the original division between the Tutsi and the Hutu was all economic and that it had little to do with race; that it had everything to do with the haves and the have-nots. He says that in the 1930’s, the Belgians, when conducting a census in Rwanda, identified those members of the population who owned ten or more cows as Tutsi, and thus as “constituting a superior, civilised ‘Hamitic’ aristocracy of northern origin. Those who owned less than ten cows were identified as Hutu, and thus constituting an inferior, primitive ‘race’. Unfortunately, many Rwandans believed this nonsense, and the result has been the recent genocide” (Baldick, 1997:17).

However, as we have observed, there is a clear physical distinction between the members of the two dichotomous sections that comprise the Rwandese and the Burundian societies and it is not all due to the wealth and health that characterise the Tutsi on the one side and the poverty and malnutrition that characterise the lot of the Hutu on the other side. Unless nutritionists are prepared to tell us that after many generations of lacto-carnivorous diet, a whole people can develop into a race quite visibly distinct from the one that was not as well endowed over the same number of generations down the line. If this argument holds any water, it may apply to the clear somatic dichotomy between the petite-bodied agricultural sections of the Pokoot and the Marakwet respectively in relation to their respective cattle-herding brothers who are taller, more ebullient if leaner with equally lean facial features to match, and definitely more athletic-looking.

The easier explanation which, however, should not be dismissed for its simplicity, if for nothing else, is that the two sections were in the process of coming together from their various backgrounds, those coming in from the North—probably carrying an ancient pint of Semitic blood in the case of the Tutsi—preferring cattle-herding while the more aboriginal sections as well as those coming in from the south and the south-west preferred land-tilling. The agriculturalists tilled their own parcels of land and, there being no cause nor cultural inclination to rob agricultural produce from the neighbours, wanted to live in peace and never prepared themselves for war, either of the defensive or of the offensive nature. That is why the pastoralists who were used to raiding stock from one another in vicious wars, were more war-hardened and prepared. So they were able to subjugate and dominate the agricultural sections almost without exception.



Picture 5: A lady from Nandi, Chapkwe Kibirir as painted by Joy Adamson in the late 1940's. All initiated and all married women had to wear such long skin garments. The shawl, koligeet, may be cast aside during work and a woman may remain bare from the waist upwards only at the farm and away from those she was ceremonially bound to respect, but at any rate never from the waist downwards, i.e., the area covered by the indispensable chepkaauit. Picture by Felan Ikenga with special permission to the author by the Museums of Kenya.

Most communities that trace their origin to the Nile Valley seem to have a highly noticeable nationalistic sense—often feeling second to none, which is a healthy sign of self-appreciation, self-acceptance as opposed to self-rejection. The latter is a psychological frame into which years of external racially driven oppression has confined many African communities. But there is a clear distinction between healthy nationalism, even if at times this may unfortunately appear to slide into ethnic chauvinism of sorts, and a sense of racial superiority. Whether this came about as a result of their having managed to impose their will on almost all the neighbouring agricultural communities or whether such victory came about as a result of this nationalistic pride that they were able to impose their will upon much larger population groups is not known. But their wealth in cattle, the most prestigious form of wealth at the time, to the exclusion of most others, may have had a lot to do with the high sense of self-appreciation in relation to the then “less fortunate” land-tilling communities. The pioneering European colonists and administrators noticed this and they did not like the fact that the Africans of the Nile did not readily acknowledge their (European's) supposed racial superiority over every other race. To

this end, Seligman notes, perhaps with a bit of grudge: “Psychically, the Nilotes show an aloofness and pride of race, with a lack of desire for European clothes or trade objects which is probably unparalleled elsewhere in Africa” (1966:112).

Sir Charles Eliot (1905:132–133) is one example of the typical anthropologist/administrator/scholar of that misinformed and, consequently, misinforming period. He says of the Nilotic-speaking people:

“Physically the Nilotes are generally tall thin men, with features which are not characteristically Negro and often almost Caucasian. Their languages are sharply distinguished from Bantu. Grammatical forms are built up chiefly by adding suffixes, and in some of them at any rate there is an article. There is also a considerable general resemblance in vocabulary and phonetics. In customs there is such general agreement as might be expected among kindred peoples practising very different modes of life, and among all the men go completely naked, though the women are clad. Other remarkable customs found both on the Nile and in East Africa are the habit of resting standing on one leg, the extraction of the middle teeth of the lower jaw, shaving the heads of women, drinking the warm blood from living animals, and the toleration of free love between the warriors and unmarried girls... They are probably a mixed race, representing a fusion of the Negro with some superior type, which we must confess to be unknown, though the neighbourhood of Egypt and Abyssinia (Ethiopia) affords support for many hypotheses. Sir H. Johnson thinks that the other and superior factor may have been the Gallas or Somalis, which is not impossible.”



Picture 6: The portrait of Pharaoh Tutankhamun, 1200 BC. He exhibits no aquiline nose yet this is a typical African profile of the ancient Egyptians. Webster's generalisation is, therefore, inaccurate—*Cairo Museum*.

The “almost Caucasian” observation above was reportedly shot down later by German scholars who wanted to scientifically prove the alleged Caucasian part-origin of the Tutsi. The Germans themselves who, having been the earliest Europeans to occupy Rwanda, had initiated the Caucasoid and “Hamitic myth” vis-a-vis the Tutsi, later discovered otherwise, following tests:

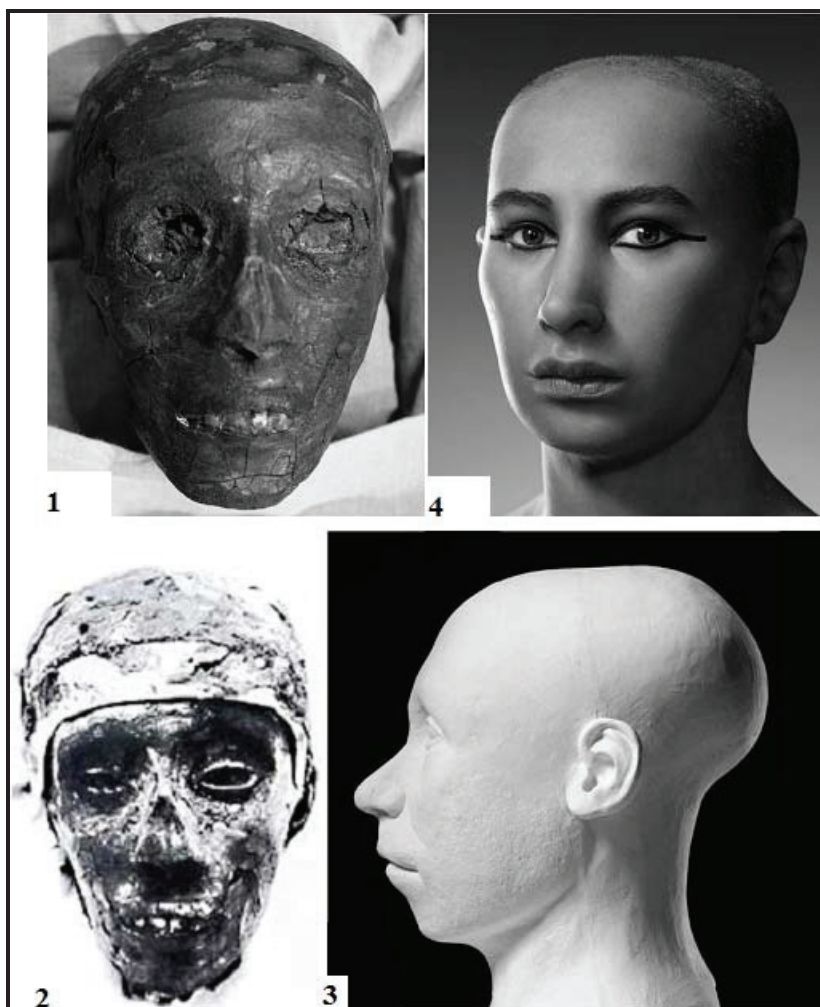
“They searched for scientific explanations by measuring the height, nose and forehead size of the Tutsis. German anthropologists eventually discovered that there is no morphological difference between Hutu and Tutsi and that their supposition that the Hutus and the Tutsi were two different races was false” (Fundi, 1999).

The claim by Eliot (<http://www.lookalike.com/lookalikes/lucille-ball-mk.htm>) that all the men of Nilotic origin went stark naked at the turn of the century, tallies with what is known of ancient Egyptians, which we shall come to shortly.

However, Eliot was partly contradicted as to the sweeping nature of his statement by his own officer, Mr., later Sir, Claud Hollis (1909:27–28), insofar as the Nandi were concerned. Hollis observed as follows:

“Both men and women are scantily dressed. The former show no signs of shame at being seen naked, but women must not appear without their lower garments (Hollis then proceeded to describe the wear apparel of the various

gender and age groups, partly contradicting himself and his boss)... The dress of the warriors consists of two or three black goats', or calves' hides, sewn together and loosely fixed by a strip of leather over the shoulder... Old men attire themselves in a *kaross* or fur garment made of hyrax, gazelle, ox, or goat hide (*sambut*, *sumet*, *tisiet*, or *ingoriet*), which they sling toga-fashion from the shoulder."



Picture 7: More faces of Tutankhamun. Numbers 1 and 2 are pictures of Tut's real mummy—his real body—number 1 being a recent picture and number 2 being one of the first pictures taken after the recovery of his body in 1926. Numbers 3 and 4 are modern plastic reconstructions done for National Geographic in America and in France respectively. The experts were given frames constructed from an actual scan job over Tut's mummy. Number 3 reproduces a dolichocephalic, prognathic typical Nilote's profile and approximates much of sub-Saharan Africa somatic profile in general. It was done by an American team who had no idea whose scan frames they were dealing with. Number 4, done in France by a team who knew that they had Tut's scan frames, produced an unlikely image of Tut all the same. It is Caucasian in colour and in most features and strikes one immediately on sight as being unfaithful to the subject—*pictures from National Geographic*.

As regards this naked claim/statements, the author testifies that during his youth, he witnessed Kalenjiin men, who when thatching houses, worked naked as if by a customary requirement. Men otherwise dressed in sheets that hung from a knot above the right shoulder and were looped diagonally under the left armpit. The occasional wind may lift the garment, leaving the bottom part of the body uncovered, but this did not disturb anyone, least of all the wearer. It seems that only married women were required to remain clad at work and the rest may rid themselves of any encumbering clothing and toil naked uninhibitedly. If there was a community that needed an exemption from the myth of discovery of nudity and shame of it by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, then it is the Kalenjiin and kin of that period and before. Ironically, the Ham from whom the Hamites were alleged to descend, were he of the proto-Kalenjiin type, would not have precipitated the laughter at his father's nakedness that the Hebrew literature claims led to the curse of his own descendants by the old man.

Let us, at this stage turn to the two definitions of "Hamite" by Webster's Bible-inspired definition:

"A descendant of Ham, Noah's second son—Gen. 6–20." Webster's ethnological definition largely echoes Seligman's, above, but goes a little further:

"A number of the chief native race of north Africa which includes not only the Berber peoples north of the Sahara, but also Fulah, Tuaregs, and Tibu in the Sudan, the extinct Guanches of the Canaries, and in East Africa the ancient Egyptians and their descendants, and the principal Ethiopian tribes, the Gallas, Somalis, and conquering tribes far to the south... The Hamites are characterised by tall stature, often with magnificent physique, dark olive, bronze, or even black skin, wavy hair, oval face with well formed features, the nose often aquiline..."

The "wavy hair" and the often "aquiline (hooked) nose" cannot possibly be referring to the Kalenjiin as a general characteristic. The Somali and some Ethiopian communities may possess such characteristics due to the widespread Semitic (Arabic) content in their blood.

The definition by Webster above is typical of the old school that referred to the Oromo and the Somali as Hamites. Cushite is the right historical term for the Oromo, Somali, Iraqw and others of that readily distinguishable black African stock. The ancient Egyptians themselves used this name in relation to these people. The Egyptian knew

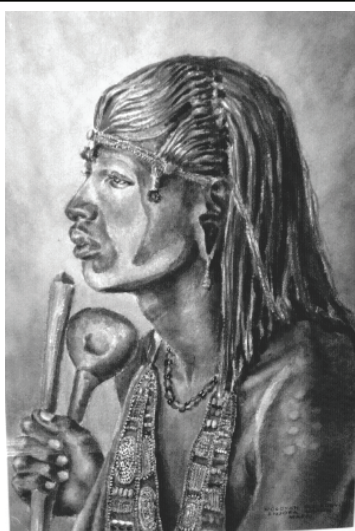
that he was himself of  *Kemet* and that the Cushites were of  *Kush* or  *Punt (Punoot?)*.



Picture 8: The occasional Cushitic-speaking African exhibits an aquiline nose in the manner described by Webster—Joy Adamson's painting of the 1940s. Courtesy of the National Museums

The Somali, Oromo (Galla), and Tutsi of Rwanda/Burundi in particular, are very tall people on the average. But the average Kalenjiin man is more erect than tall and is only tall in relation to his Bantu-speaking neighbour who is likely to appear short and stout.

The Hamitisation and De-Hamitisation of the Kalenjiin



Picture 9: The Maasai moran, Moroyan, as painted by Joy Adamson in the 1940's. A typical ancient Egyptian man's profile—
Picture courtesy National Museums of Kenya

A British administrator-cum-historian who served in the Nandi County during the fifties of the Twentieth century, observed as follows about the Nandi branch of the Kalenjiin:

“Most Nandi are of medium height, although they appear to be taller because of their upright carriage and military bearing. They are slightly built and seldom carry surplus fat. Trunk and limbs show no pronounced muscular development, and the Nandi have neither the physical strength for heavy manual labour nor the stamina for sustained work. On the other hand, they are agile, athletic and able to travel long distances without fatigue; when marching, hunting and raiding, they exhibit considerable powers of endurance and great reserves of strength” (Matson, 1972:9).

Matson gives the measurements with regard to the Nandi as: average height, 67 inches and the average weight as 130–140 lb. The ancient Egyptian, on the average, was not tall either. For instance, compare the Nandi average height with the respective heights of the Pharaohs Akhenaton and Tutankhamun: 5ft. 5.25 inches and 5ft. 6 inches.¹² Then compare Matson's statement above with the archaeological field-based data compiled by Batrawi (1945/46): “The pre-dynastic Egyptian was of medium height, about 66 inches in flesh, and dolichocephalic,¹³ with an index, as regards Naqada crania of 73 (corresponding to 75 in the living).”

As for the cephalic index,

“Masai, Nandi, and Turkana give a cephalic index of 73–74 (which, being under 75, is dolicocephalic, i.e. the head is prominently long from forehead to back of head and narrower from side to side); but the Suk (Pokoot) are mesocephalic with an index of about 77” (Seligman, 1966:104).

¹² Pharaohs' measurements were done by Dr Douglas E. Derry and reported in his *Report upon the Examination of Tutankhamen's mummy*, in Howard Carter's *The Tomb of Tutankhamen*, Barn & Jenkins, London, 1972, copyright Phyllis Walker, 1954. Appendix 1.

¹³ Like the Kalenjiin, see Seligman 1966:104 and Peristiany, 1939:1.

Cephalic index expresses the width of the skull (at its widest point) as a percentage of the length from front to back. When measurements are made directly on a skull, the percentage is known as the *cranial index*. Craniologists distinguish three basic classifications of skulls based on cranial and cephalic indexes: *dolichocephalic* (long skulls), with widths of less than 75 per cent of the length; *mesocephalic* (medium skulls), with indexes of 75 to 80; and *brachycephalic* (broad skulls), with indexes of more than 80 per cent (Cf. MEE 98/17).

The colonial administrator/anthropologist, Sir Charles Eliot the Commissioner (governor) for the British ‘East Africa Protectorate’ that was later to become Kenya, saw the ancient Egyptians in the Tugen people, a characteristic he pointed out as being common among the other branches of the Kalenjin as among the Maasai. In his book, *The East Africa Protectorate*, published in 1905, he says the following of the Tugen, whom he calls *Kamasia*, the derogatory name given them by the Maasai and promoted by the British:

“Of the Kamasia there is little to be said. They are not many in number, or well known, and as in their weapons and manner of dressing the hair they imitate the Masai, they are often not distinguished from them... Like all this group of tribes, they are probably of mixed origin, and show very various physical types. I have been much struck by seeing in assemblies of warriors held at Londiani or the Ravine faces which seem to reproduce the features of the ancient Egyptians as shown on their monuments” (Eliot, 1905:147).



Picture 10: The “Nandi Man” portrait by Ray Nestor, early 20th century. Another typical profile of the ancient Egyptians—*Picture courtesy of Moi University, Eldoret*

In the late forties of the Twentieth century, Joy Adamson, of the *Born Free* movie fame, was to make similar remarks about the Kalenjin. The hairstyle alluded to by Sir Charles Eliot is given a more detailed descriptive treatment by Joy Adamson. Between the two westerners, a combined picture is painted of the physical features, hairstyle and apparel that recreated images of ancient Egypt right in the heart of Kalenjinland.

Joy Adamson was going round Kenya painting the various ethnic communities in their traditional costumes and she had just turned to Rift Valley and her experience in Kalenjinland inspired her as follows:

“The Africans of this area had been very little exposed to European influences and wore their traditional garments. Most of the inhabitants of the valley (Rift Valley) were Nilo-Hamites, which accounted for their fine looks and great height... Most men had their hair braided into pigtails and greased with ochre

and fat, but once I noticed a young man wearing a head ornament of blue beads of a distinctly Egyptian style” (Adamson, 1967).¹⁴

The description of Hamitic speakers, or Nilo-Hamites, put together by Frank Snowden Jr., seems to be more cogent on the physical aspect. However, a more complete picture emerges when it is read together with the descriptions of others. Snowden (1970:8) writes:

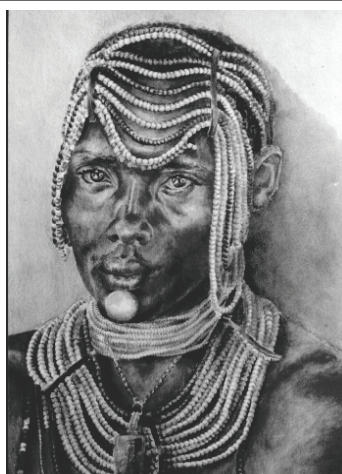
“Another subtype of Negro known to the ancients apparently resembled a group described variously by anthropologists as Nilotic, Hamitic, or Nilo-Hamitic. This type is black or bluish-black in colour, has reduced prognathism (often absent), less platyrrhiny, and lips probably less thick or everted than in the “true” Negro, with hair, according to M.J. Herskovits, ranging from less tightly curled to almost straight, and with long narrow faces.”

Dr Peristiany, the Greek Cypriot anthropologist who wrote about the Kipsigiis branch of the Kalenjiin before the Second World War, described their somatic attributes (1939:1) as follows: “The Kipsigiis are dolichocephalic, and comparatively thin-lipped and leptorrhine, of a light brown or copper-red colour and are of tall stature.”

Another description of the Kipsigiis by an early colonial administrator, found in an old colonial government record, probably written within the first decade of the century, intended to be none too flattering, either to the subjects then being described or to their Bantu-speaking neighbours. The report reads:

“As might be expected the Kipsigis exhibit a variety of types of feature and form. The tall handsome Hamite, the burley Niletic (sic), the prognathous and somewhat repellant Bantu, the small nicely made hunter. The features of the women do not compare with those of the men either from a masculine or feminine stand point. The hair of the head varies from Negro wool to the crinkly and finer hair of Hamite. The feet are often hypsolide and as often well-formed. The carriage of the young men and girls is erect and free” (D.C. Ker 3/1).

The prognathism (i.e. jaws appearing to protrude forwards prominently in relation to the forehead) mentioned above, was not absent from the ancient Egyptians either, and is a widespread African characteristic. This is confirmed by Batrawi (1945/46) from archaeological fieldwork: “The southern Egyptians were distinguished from



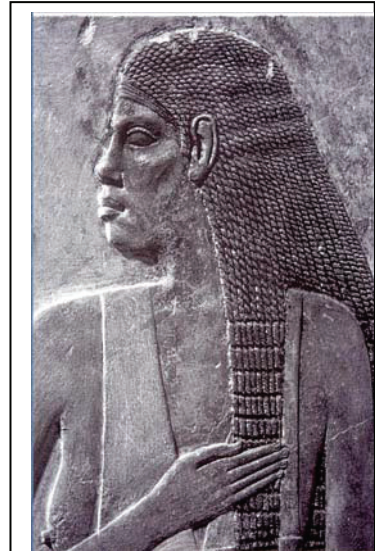
Picture 11: The Kalenjiin man of Marakwet, Jano araap Kessir, as painted by Joy Adamson in the 1940's. Joy was struck by the ancient Egyptian's profile that Jano cut—*Picture courtesy of National Museums of Kenya.*

¹⁴. The young man who sported Egyptian-style beadwork was Jano araap Kessir. His portrait, by Joy Adamson, is included.

the northerners by a smaller cranial index (i.e. they were dolicocephalic), a larger nasal index (i.e. relatively more broad-nosed) and greater prognathism (in relation to the northerners)” (Seligman, 1966:63).

The African scientist and historian who as early as 1956 taught physics and chemistry in France, Cheikh Anta Diop, carried out melanin tests on mummies in order to determine their skin pigmentation. At first sight this would appear to have been an unnecessary undertaking, however, considering that even the word “mummy” itself means “black” or “tar” in Arabic, this having come about as a result of the Arab-speaking layman’s examination of the skin of the mummies which is indeed profoundly black. But the melanin test was inevitable all the same considering that many early Egyptologists painted and promoted the wrong picture for too long and, therefore, strong, even superfluous, corrective measures, can neither be considered out of place nor overdone. After explaining that the melanin test involves the use of ultra-violet rays for determining the amount of melanin in a pigmentation, Diop (1996:141) concludes:

“The same goes for that (skin) of the ancient Egyptian. This is the reason why, from prehistory to the ptolemaic period, the Egyptian mummy has invariably remained black. In other words, during all Egypt’s known history, the skin of all Egyptians of all social classes (from Pharaoh to fellah), has remained that of authentic blacks. The same goes for their bone structure. Witness: (western Egyptologist) Lepsius’ canon (sic). And science seriously asked the following question: ‘Are we right in considering as black a people whose nationals, from the beginning to the end of history, have had black skin and negroid bone structure?’”



Picture 12: Hathorneferhetep, limestone, 3rd Dyn, (Cairo CG 1386)—Picture courtesy of Richard-Lepsius-Institute, Humboldt University, Berlin

The laboratory work of Diop and the works of the western Egyptologist, Lepsius, well summarised above, combined with the archaeological reports of Betrawi, which confirmed the Negroid profiles of the fossils of the Egyptians of very remote antiquity, give us an unassailable platform to carry forward our arguments without being tied too much to the controversy of what racial classification to assign the ancient Egyptians.

We may say that from the same descriptions, and those further above, it is clear that in the dolicocephalic Kalenjiin (and in the Maasai, the Turkana and the Iteso) of East Africa, a physically and culturally distinct, describable African subrace, actually existed among others of varying African somatic construction. The early anthropologists had duly assigned to them a collective name. That classificatory nomenclature was later to be contested partly on account of its being based on a physical rather than cultural distinctiveness. The naming appeared to have been inspired by racial rather than social terminology.

Basil Davidson, whose history books everyone going through the school system in Kenya during the author's school days had to read at one stage or other, as a mandatory part of the history subject's syllabus, has not been left behind in the collective "de-Hamitising" effort. He accepts the blackness of pre-Arab Egypt unequivocally, but goes on to list the Hamite label among the

"stereotypes of the racial model (which) the scholarship of the last thirty years and more simply tipped into the dustbin of exploded fantasies... This was not achieved easily or without a lot of stubborn effort; but it has now been achieved beyond any possibility of reversion to those aforesaid fantasies. It may even be claimed that this achievement is among the most significant intellectual advances of the twentieth century..." (Davidson 1989:47).



Picture 13: Head of Queen Tiy, New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, i.e., the dynasty that ruled approximately between 1600 and 1300 BC (Berlin 21834). According to the recent DNA studies published by *National Geographic*, February 16, 2010, Queen Tiy was the mother of Ikhnaton, the Pharaoh who, with his own full sister—as the DNA studies now show—fathered Tutankhamun who succeeded him to the throne as a child-king. Queen Tiy here, in her physical profile, represents an average Egyptian of her time—Picture from Berlin Museum of Egyptian Art

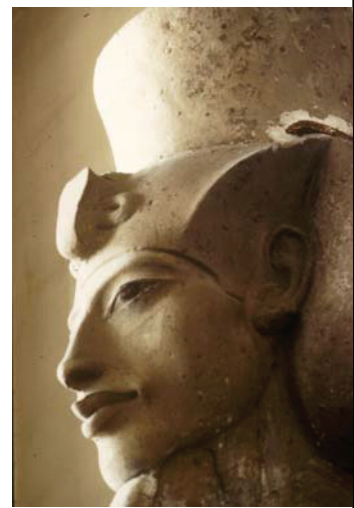
This last boast, itself of historical proportions, illustrates the extent of urgency and emotion surrounding this whole subject on the part of certain historians, even one like Davidson who is otherwise known for relative objectivity in his treatment of African history. The effect of this whole argument is to intellectually wish away a whole black African people who do not fit 100 per cent into the social, linguistic, psychological as well as the physical mould of other African groupings that nobody is trying to similarly erase from the world map. So established and undisturbed are the following ethnic classifications: Cushites, Negroes, Nilotics, Bantus, and Khoisans.

Not that one should treasure the classification of Africans according to their minute “racial” and linguistic idiosyncrasies—especially when such initiative comes from outsiders whose motive for doing so may either be positively inquisitive or, at times, suspect. But given that African anthropologists have not come up with their own alternatives, and yet the necessity still exists to know more about the Africans, we have no choice but to go by the available tools of identification, which happen to be of outside origin. For our part, we shall take such classifications as being indications of *variety* and not regard them as manifestations of innate *differences*. The former has positive connotations while the latter harbours seeds of confrontation whose ugliest harvest has been amply demonstrated in Rwanda and in Burundi.

It is worth noting that the demographic characteristics of the two countries are identical: 15% Tutsi and 85% Hutu. The former’s ancestors, who were either Nilotic or Cushitic-speaking, came from the north centuries ago. The Hutu ancestors were the earlier inhabitants who were predominantly Bantu speakers. Although the Tutsi abandoned their original language and adopted the host’s Bantu-based language, little integration by way of intermarriage took place between the two peoples, to the extent that it is still easy to tell one stock from the other centuries on. The devastating efficiency that has characterised the war between the two population groups has been facilitated and encouraged by those superficial appearances.

Of late, terms like “Highland Nilotes,” “River-Lake Nilotes” and “Plains Nilotes,” have been coined for the Kalenjin, Luo and Maasai respectively.¹⁵ This has helped find some classificatory “home” for the people who are being “de-Himitised” for their own good! Also because they exist and could not be completely wished away.

But if these people are still referring to themselves as the “People of *Emeet*,” why not use this what is their own chosen term for themselves? A term that they have kept over the millennia—perhaps longer than any other known community the world over may have done in respect of its own self-name?



Picture 14: The 3,300+ year old head of Pharaoh Ikhnaton from his 4-meter stone statue in Cairo Museum. DNA studies have conclusively placed him as the father of Tutankhamun, the mother of the boy king being Ikhnaton’s own full sister, according to National Geographic reports.

¹⁵ The notable pioneering users of the new designations were B.A. Ogot and J. Kieran (eds), *Zamani: A Survey of East African History* (Nairobi: Longmans and East African Publishing House, 1968)—Ehret 1971:3.

Some European historians and anthropologists, as exemplified by Basil Davidson above, have promptly come to the African intellectuals' aid in their "de-Hamitising" "struggle"—but for different reasons. One ostensible reason put forward by them is that the more common designation "Nilo Hamites" presupposes that these people are half Nilotic and half Hamitic where Hamitic is supposed to be the same as Cushitic in both language and physical characteristics. One western scholar, Ehret, considered this "not a very likely historical and linguistic fact" (1971:39).

Let us admit, for argument's sake, the obvious racial—within the black African context—linguistic and historical fact, that Cushites are different from Hamites. That we have real Cushites who are not Hamites and real Hamites who are not Cushites; then we must see no reason to force the Hamitic label on Cushites; and then go ahead to separate the real Hamites from their own fitting label on the ground that they are not Cushites and so they cannot be Hamites!

Eisee Reclus suggested in the *The Earth and its Inhabitants* (1882 Vol 2:314), about 110 years ago, that the term *Kam*, *Kham* (and Ham[ite]), as applied to African peoples in the Genesis; might be nothing but the ancient Egyptian name for their country *Kemet* (). And, indeed, most of the Kalenjiin nationalities call their homeland *emeet*. This simply means "the country," or "the nation." The root of the word is *eem*. The Pokoot, a northern branch of Kalenjiin, have retained the original *Hem* for "nation," and the "nation of Pokoot" is therefore styled *Hem-pa-Pokoot* (Beech, 1911:109).¹⁶ So, as suggested by Reclus, the names "Ham" and "Hamite" might just have come from the "people of *hem-eet*" where *hem-eet* referred to both country and its people. It is likely that *emeet* was originally *khemeet*, or even *hemeet* as suggested by the combination of the Pokoot substantive form *hem*, "nationality," and the central Kalenjiin definite form *emeet* as well as the ancient Egyptian definite form *kemet*.

This phenomenon of change of sound in tandem with distance north-to-south can be demonstrated. The northern Egyptian Coptic dialect, termed Bohairic, employs the /kh/ sound a lot. The southern dialect, referred to as Sahidic, would use only /h/, omitting the /k/ where /kh/ is employed in Bohairic. So, if the northerners referred to their country as *khemeet* for instance, the southerners would call it *hemeet* and as one comes much further south, skipping Pokoot country and to the heartland of the central Kalenjiin, the /h/ is lost altogether and the people here just have *emeet* left of it.

One word (out of many), which illustrates this changing of sound as one comes southward is the word that is equivalent to the English preposition "in" as in the phrase "in the name of the Father." In Bohairic Coptic, it is **hen** (*khen*). The Sahidic dialect of Coptic further south has it in the form **hen** (*hen*) and Kalenjiin, of course, has it as *een*.

¹⁶ Pokoot ignores the Hamitic definite article /t/ often and were it to be added to *Hem*, we would have *Hem-eet*, which is reasonably close to "Hamite."

However, the ancient Egyptians also spelt their word for “the land”  which Budge (1920:6) transcribed *amait*. With the benefit of the Kalenjiin language—of which Budge was deprived—we can point out with little hesitation that this should have been transcribed *emeet*.

So why resist the designation “Hamite” when most probabilities point to it having been an authentic African people’s name for their own nation and country? The life and the reported role of Ham in early Hebrew literature is extraneous to the author’s acceptance of the term Hamite. The understanding and usage of the term here, leans largely on the historical and linguistic side and less on the emotional, racial, and biblical side, if at all. It is a convenient, historically-rooted term that groups together certain obviously related languages and their speakers into a real family which, by any other name, would still be one distinguishable family.

Merker’s Maasai/Kalenjiin Ancient Egyptian “Semites” Theory, 1904

A German anthropologist, M. Merker, started a debate with a controversial book published in 1904, *Die Masai: ethnographische Monographie eines ostafrikanischen Semitenvolkes*. In that book, he powerfully, articulated his conviction that in the Maasai and the Tatoog branch of the Tanzanian Kalenjiin communities, he had discovered a Semitic people in East Africa. The debate conducted in the early print media, notably in *The East African Standard* (which had just been launched, 1902),¹⁷ indicates a wide chasm in the viewpoints of the early colonial settlers and administrators with regard to Merker’s claim.

It may be useful to note that Merker, confined his investigation to the Tanzanian Maasai and the Kalenjiin branches there at the turn of the century. This was largely because Tanganyika, as mainland Tanzania was then known, was a German “possession.” This fact made it administratively convenient for him to carry out his research within the confines of that territory. At almost precisely the same time, the Briton, Hollis, was busying himself with the Kenyan Maasai branch—soon to shift attention to a Kenyan branch of the Kalenjiin. Generally speaking, whatever holds true about the respective Tanzanian branches of the Maasai and the Kalenjiin, is bound to hold true too among the Kenyan branches of the same respective peoples and vice versa.

Hollis, who as stated, was concurrently conducting parallel research among the Kenyan Maasai, denied that Maasai traditions that were analogous to the ancient Hebrew and Babylonian stories, a great number of which Merker had documented in his book, were known to the Kenyan Maasai. This prompted the then colonial governor of The East Africa Protectorate, whose work we have cited further above, Sir Charles Eliot (1905:140), to remark:

¹⁷ Early copies of the colonial newspapers are preserved in the basement archive section of McMillan Library, Nairobi.

“I cannot help suspecting that, if they are known in German territory (Tanganyika), they must be due to European and Christian influence. It is true that the Masai have by no means shown themselves amenable to missionary influence; but a certain number of them have learned to read and write in the old-established mission at Taveta, and they may possibly have got hold of some distorted version of the biblical account of the early history of the world.”

To the initiated in the matters touching on the Maasai, this view is plainly naïve, considering the mass of indigenous Maasai information, including sayings of the wise, most of which are not biblical, that Merker collected, the Maasai conservatism and how new Christianity was in this part of Africa, even in Taveta which was not part of Maasai country. Nevertheless, Eliot allowed himself some leeway:

“It would be rash to assume that a people coming from the north and the neighbourhood of Egypt and Abyssinia cannot have brought with them such traditions” (1905:140).

Before we focus attention on Merker’s fleeting impression of the Kalenjin, as represented by the Tatoog, we may first acquaint ourselves with Merker’s definition of the ethnic designation “Semite” which he launches into here, contrasting the Maasai people’s physical characteristics with those of the modern Jews—one of the “official” Semite races:

“If I may here counter a generally held error. When a layman hears of Semites, he thinks of a people whose external appearance is similar to or resembles that of today’s Jews. This is completely wrong, because Jews in their generality are no longer Semites. They were Semites when they were strong nomadic people; the mixing of blood began already during the transitional stage from nomadism to a semi, periodic settled people, which after the completion of settling became more vigorous thereby changing the shape of the body drastically and developed a new one... The Semites are tall, slender figures with handsome finely cut facial features: narrow, sometimes long, but not unbeautiful noses; small and rarely delicate feet and hands. The pure Semitic character is perhaps not often represented among today’s Jews. It appears to me that the Jews from Aden show some purity. A large number of today’s Jews on the contrary show clearly more or less characteristics of the race of the Hittites... strong (brachycephalic) heads, large bent fleshy noses, dark hair, dark eyes, strong receding forehead, prominent chest bones, rough bones and a plumb body build... I consider the Masai the descendants of the nomadic Semitic people, which belong to the oldest Hebrew pastoral people” (Merker 1904: Ch. 1).

To Merker, the Tatoog, or Tatooga (Barabaig are a section of these), were part of the Semitic group that came to the African continent from Asia, founded the Egyptian civilisation, and then blocked other Semites from entering Africa. Some of those Semites that had become Egyptian, were later to migrate southwards—hence the Tatoog and, later, the Maasai. Of the Tatoog he says:

“Among the above Semite nations of East Africa, I consider the Tatoga to be one of the oldest purest or less mixed or only in certain castes with niggers, of whom those living near Iraku and Ufiomi are called El Ataturu... As far as I can establish, they are the oldest inhabitants of the East African steppes, from where they were driven out by the Maasai... (These Tatoog were pushed from place to place near their present habitat in Mbulu District as they gradually became poorer and poorer, having lost cattle and having begun to hunt-gather even as they attempted to settle and farm...) The fact that they had little success to complete the transaction from nomads to farmers makes it clear that they are the dirtiest blacks I have ever met and that they still live from the old settled peoples like parasites” (Merker 1904/1910: Ch. 1).¹⁸

The occasional serious, honest, western researcher has, however, maintained that the ancient Egyptian, and the beginnings of his civilisation, came from the southern interior of Africa—Eastern Africa being quite notable in this respect—and not from outside of the continent as claimed by Merker above. One such scholar, Sir Wallis Budge, is emphatic about the African origin of the ancient Egyptian. He observes that the ancient Egyptian language “was fundamentally an African language” and says as follows about the ancient Egyptian’s words, the bulk of which he considers to be monosyllabic:

“These are words used to express fundamental relationships and feelings, and beliefs which are peculiarly African and are foreign in every particular to Semitic peoples. The primitive home of the people who invented these words lay far to the south of Egypt, and all that we know of the Pre-dynastic Egyptians suggest that it was in the neighbourhood of the Great Lakes, probably to the east of them. The whole length of the Valley of the Nile lay then, as now, open to peoples who dwelt to the west and east of it, and there must always have been a mingling of immigrants with its aboriginal inhabitants” (Budge 1920: Ixviii).

Budge confirms this view by way of his definition of Punt, the country often mentioned by the ancient Egyptians in their records: “Punt  a gold-bearing country in the Southern Sudan, whence came some of the aboriginal Egyptians (called)      *Puntiu*” (Dictionary 984a).¹⁹

The observation that the ancient Egyptians originated from further south of their country and, by extension, right in the heart of Africa, is corroborated by the Bible, by way of Ezekiel 29:13–14:

“Yet this is what the Sovereign Lord says: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were scattered. I will bring them back from captivity and return them to Upper Egypt (i.e. the South,

¹⁸ Parts of Ch. 1, Merker 1904, were kindly translated from German into English for the author by Ambassador John Lanyasunya, until recently Kenya’s ambassador to Berlin.

¹⁹ When the Kalenjin call themselves *Punoot*, they may be doing so with reference to this cradle-land of the ancient Egyptians. But, again, *Punoot* carries the connotation of “migrants on the move” or “new arrivals.”

called by the Hebrews *Pathros*) the land of their ancestry. There they will be a lowly kingdom.”²⁰

It being their self-acknowledged cradle-land, the ancient Egyptians associated the south with   *khent* “pre-eminence, exalted condition, tip, limit (i.e. of excellence), in the front, in the forepart, before, aforetime, formerly, previously, in advance, the beginning: the land south of Egypt” (Budge Dict. 554a, cf. Faulkner 194–195). Within the same context, they called the one “who is at the head, the chief, the forerunner, in the first rank, leader, etc.   *khenti* (and the) leader of the fight    *khenti eha*, (and) those who go forward    *khentiu*” (Budge Dict. 554a). All these words are cognate with Kalenjiin *kaantoi*, “leaders,” “those in front,” “those of before,” and *kantoiintet* (*kandoiindet*) “the leader.” The root word is *taa*, “front,” “before,” “ahead,” Coptic **ⲁⲧⲉⲃⲓ** *hi-tehi*, “in front” (Crum 642). The same is evident in ancient Egyptian for “primeval time, remote ages”     *paut ta* (Budge Dict. 230b) which is Kalenjiin *po taa* or *aap taa*.

The ancient Egyptians, naturally, considered the south interior of Africa where their cradle-land of Punt, Pwenet (or *Punoot*?) was located, their “Holy Land,”  *T3 ntr* “God’s Land” (Faulkner’s Dict. 293).  *T3 ntr* may be compared to Kalenjiin *ol-ta ne toroor* “the high/exalted place.” According to oral sources, the place name *Tororo* in Eastern Uganda, 65–70 km Southwest of Mt. Elgon, is said to be from Kalenjiin *Toroor*, “high and massive.” The place was previously inhabited by the Kalenjiin and they, or people akin to them, gave it that name.²¹

It is also important to note the fact that those ancient Egyptians attributed the invention of all their science and technology to their “gods” whose “official” residence was at  *T3 ntr*. And no wonder this area, which included Meroe, “was the centre of an iron smelting industry and may have been a source of the spread of iron-casting techniques in ancient Africa. Extensively excavated, the site revealed royal palaces, temples to Amon and Isis, and a group of pyramids.” (GME 1993, “Meroe”).

²⁰ The Holy Bible, New International Version, 1973–1984.

²¹ (Oral interview: Nandi, 1992. Paramount Chief araap Kirwa,) In the search for Punt, Punoot, or the principal ancient cradle-land of the Egyptians, Tororo should be an inevitable port of call to the excavators. Presently very little excavation work has been done south of Sudan except in the search for early man by the Leakey family and associates.

CHAPTER 3

Locating the Kalenjin's Cradle-land and Establishing the Migration Route

Indeed, generation after generation of the elders of the Kalenjin-speaking people have passed on to the youth the tradition that their ancestors of antiquity migrated to East Africa from *Misiri*, i.e., Egypt (Cf. Lang'at, 1969:74, Kipkorir, 1978:5, Sang, 2000:1). The persistence and consistency have been such that Chesaina describes this oral tradition that she also encountered time and time again during her oral fieldwork all over Kalenjinland, for her book, *Oral Literature of the Kalenjin*, as follows:

“The most popular theory says that the Kalenjin originated from a country in the north of Kenya known as ‘Emetab Burgei’, which means the hot country. It is speculated that this country was either Sudan or Egypt” (Chesaina 1991:1, also see *The relative myth/legend* 1991:29).

After conducting his own oral research in Kipsigiisland, Sang (2000:1) echoes Chesaina: “*Ole woo komwoe kole ki kiyobu Misri anan ko Southern Sudan amun emotinwechoton tugul ko melewet.*” i.e., “The majority maintain that we came from *Misri* (Egypt) or Southern Sudan, all these being desert lands.”

By surviving into the present, an old oral tradition will have demonstrated a capacity to appeal to the interests of enough people to ensure its long and continuous retention and retelling (Cf. Henige, 1982:107). In this, we see the diffusion of an oral tradition and culture in two dimensions, horizontal and vertical. The geographic horizontal diffusion applies in the sense that actual migration of the vehicles of transmission (humans) along land, and covering a huge distance, took place; and the temporal vertical diffusion applies in the sense that the people involved continued transmitting the oral tradition and the old culture from their new geographical setting from generation to generation (Cf. Krohn, 1971:153). What happened is, therefore, a recognised development as far as oral tradition scholars are concerned.

The undying popular tradition of *Misrian* origin on the part of the Kalenjin was very much alive and “distinct” when Sir Claud Hollis, the British colonial administrator-cum-anthropologist, studied the Nandi branch of the Kalenjin-speaking people between 1905 and 1908 AD. The traditional claim of *Misrian* origin cannot, therefore, be linked to early Christian proselytes who were merely trying to associate their origin with biblical places and times as Lang'at (1969:74)

seems to imply. Hollis came soon after the cessation of the colonial subjugation hostilities and the British had achieved total control of Kalenjiinland. There were virtually no Kalenjiin Christian proselytes by that time—certainly not a single soul in Nandi, Marakwet, Tugen, etc. had been proselytised as yet—and most could neither read nor write. Yet they all maintained the *Misiri* origin tradition equally and consistently.

Says Hollis:

“The ancestors of the main body of what constitutes the so-called Nandi-Lumbwa group, came, beyond doubt, from the north. There is a distinct tradition to this effect, and it seems probable that the tribes allied to the Nandi who live on or near Mount Elgon (The Lako, Kony, Mbai, Sabaut, Sapin, Pok, and Kipkara) are only a section of the migrants, the remainder having pushed on to the south and east, and settled in Nandi, Lumbwa, Buret, Sotik, Elgeyo, and Kamasia” (Cf. Hollis 1909:2, also Hobley, 1902:10).

This is what the governor of the East Africa Protectorate that was later to be named Kenya, Sir Charles Eliot, said in his introduction to A.C. Hollis’ earlier book on the Maasai, in 1904:

“... It also seems probable that the physical type of these races (Masai, Nandi, Turkana, Dinka & co.) represents a mixture between the Negro and some other factor. It does not seem to me possible to make any definite statement as to what that factor may be, but the neighbourhood of Egypt and Abyssinia (Ethiopia) renders several hypotheses plausible...”

Hollis is obviously relying on the oral tradition of *Misiri* origin which he has summarised, as “distinct tradition to this effect” in order to be able to draw his definitive conclusion: “The main body of what constitutes the so-called Nandi-Lumbwa group, came, beyond doubt, from the north.” Just how reliable oral tradition is as a source of history is a topic that has been well debated by Jan Vansina. We may here add his views to the effect that what a historian can do is to arrive at some approximation to the ultimate truth. That he or she does this by using calculations of probability, by interpreting the facts and by evaluating them in an attempt to recreate for himself or herself the circumstances that existed at certain given moments of the past. And here,

“... the historian using oral traditions finds himself on exactly the same level as historians using any other kind of historical source material. No doubt he will arrive at a lower degree of probability than would otherwise be attained, but that does not rule out the fact that what he is doing is valid, and that, it is history” (Vansina, 1996:125).²²

On his part, the author set out in 1990 to investigate this Egyptian-origin legend of the Kalenjiin people and began by studying the dead language and dialects of the

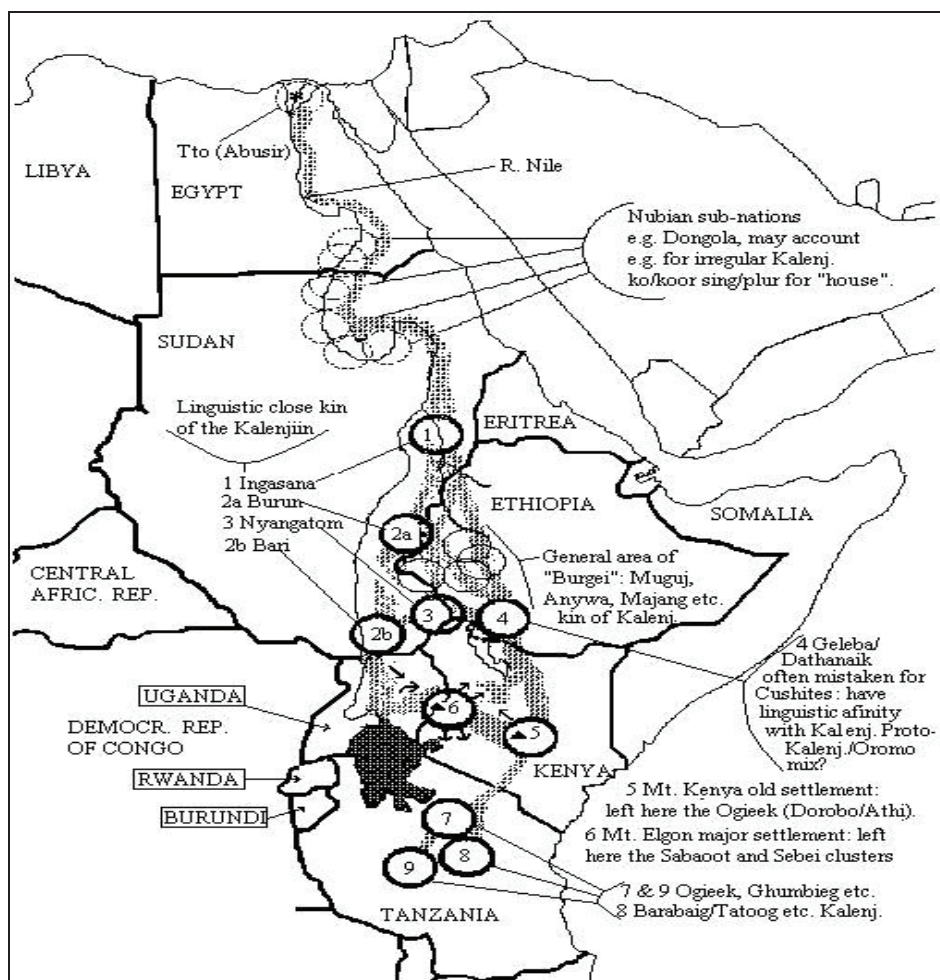
²² Reproduced in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. Dunaway and Baum, 1996, from a reprinting of Vansina’s 1965, “Oral Tradition and Historical Methodology” in *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (1961).

ancient Egyptians. Armed with and facilitated by the linguistic tool, he went on to study those ancient people's religion and other aspects of culture, all in order to compare those respective human traits with their modern Kalenjiin parallels—much of which was collected from the oral field—and thus to establish the age-old claim of origin either way.

Egypt is now, for all practical purposes, an Arabised Islamic country and it is not easy to trace, from studying any section of their current population, evidence of a people of proto-Kalenjiin (the ancestors of, or the Kalenjiin-to-be) nature. But the Arabisation and Islamisation phenomenon diminishes progressively as one comes southward of Egypt. And where the phenomenon of Arabisation halts, the population begins to exhibit Kalenjiin and other indigenous African linguistic, social and cultural traits with increasing intensity as one comes further southwards towards the present heartland of the Kalenjiin and the other related black African peoples in East Africa.

The proto-Kalenjiin migrants to Eastern Africa left evidence all along the migratory route by way of the existing settlements of kin peoples. These settlements of kin peoples constitute a socio-cultural and geographical proof of a historical claim. The fact that the existing settlements describe a narrow north-south axis, or a belt, proves that these people were either migrating northwards or southwards.²³ The Kalenjiin people's oral tradition, understandably for a people now domiciled two and a half thousand and more kilometres south of Egypt asserts that the migration in their case was southwards.

²³ The Egyptologist, Wallis Budge, with reference to this precise area vis-a-vis Egypt, argues that migration was always constant in both directions—Budge 1920:lxviii.



Map 3: Probable routes of proto-Kalenjiin migration and settlements still inhabited by linguistically akin peoples. All movement is southward or as per arrow, although the reverse may not be ruled out in any of the cases. Based on various works of Seligman, Tucker, Bender, Ehret, and the author.

Evidence, illustrated by plotting the existing settlements of the Kalenjiin and their kin on the maps of Ethiopia, the Sudans, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, indicates that the ancestors of the Kalenjiin followed the eastern banks of the merged Nile right from their former Egyptian abode. The south was an attractive direction to migrate towards, not least for religious reasons. The south was the ancient Egyptians' esteemed "Holy Land," their land of origin (Budge 1920:lxviii) which they called "the land of our 'gods'"  *T3 ntr*. Besides, the river that was Egypt's life flowed from there. The migrants were also encouraged at every point of the way by the progressively diminishing desert conditions as they moved south and pastures got greener—there could have been no greater incentive for a pastoral people.

It is worth noting that Faulkner's *A Concise Dictionary of Ancient Egyptian* p. 293.

 *T3 ntr* may relate to Kalenjiin *ol-to ne toroor* "the exalted/high place." *To* is an old Kalenjiin word for a "place" which now survives and is used only with the help of a prefix e.g. *yu-to* "this place," *yoo-to* "that place" *oloo-to* "that general place" *oli-to* "this general place" (it is however possible, if unlikely, that the *-to* here is part of the Hamitic definite article governed by /t/).  *T3 ntr* may also relate to the Maasai *Naiteru*, "the creator," "the beginner." It may also relate to *Tororrot*: according to some Kalenjiin branches, e.g. Pokoot, the highest placed superhuman is *Tororrot*, lit. "the Sky" of whom some Tugen man told Beech (1911:19) was the husband of *Asiis*, lit. "the Sun." Someone also told Beech that the Pokoot believed *Asiis* to be the younger brother of *Tororrot*. *Tororrot* seems to be a feminine gender name—although some Tugen say *Tororrot* is the husband of *Asiis*—and tallies with ancient Egyptian word for "Goddess,"  *Trt* (Cf. Gardiner, 1927:614).

At the confluence of the Blue and White Niles—present-day Khartoum—the migrants were faced with a choice: either to follow the westward White Nile course or the eastward Blue Nile course. Where a choice had to be made, all options being equal, they would follow the course of the tributary that flowed from the east rather than follow the course of the tributary that appeared to flow from the west. Having the present Kalenjiin religious attitude in mind, the reason for turning towards the east at the confluence may have had a lot to do with religion: namely that the east, where the morning sun broke the horizon, symbolised blessings of *Asiis*, the Deity. In contrast, the west symbolised decline and death, as that was the direction of the setting sun.

The Blue Nile, which flowed from the east, would, therefore, be *favoured* over the White Nile, which, at the confluence, would appear to be flowing from the west. The word *favoured* here is emphasised to indicate that, while most clans followed the eastern route, a few may have chosen to follow the White Nile course with or without the intention to rejoin the others later on further south.

Some of those that followed the course of the White Nile, and who had been influenced heavily by the non-circumcising communities of Sudan that lived along the western banks of the White Nile—the migration route of their choice—would not and did not rejoin the others. According to the elderly Kalenjiin informants, some of those were the ancestors of the Luo of Kenya. The Luo are still domiciled approximately to the west of the larger Kalenjiin communities still divided from their cousins by a socio-religious wall that is no thicker than a foreskin, yet so impenetrable.

Culturally, the Luo and their close kin on both sides and especially to the west of the White Nile, e.g. the Dinka, do not circumcise. According to the Kalenjiin elders, the author interviewed, e.g. Paramount Chief araap Kirwa, (Oral interview: Nandi, 1992). the ancestors of the Luo used to circumcise before they became a completely

separate ethnic entity from the people whose descendants are now mostly domiciled to the east of the White Nile and generally to the east of the Luo

The migration route now described by the almost linear north-south remnant settlements of the people akin to the Kalenjin along the Blue Nile and about the southern highlands of Ethiopia, is similar to that described by C.G. Seligman in a 1933 lecture thus: “The third route (for ancient Egyptian influence) is up the Nile to what is now Khartoum, thence up the Blue Nile, along the region of the Abyssinian (Ethiopian) foothills, and so to the Great Lakes, and westward to Congo” (Seligman, 1934:11).

The proto-Kalenjin people came in several waves, some settling permanently at scattered points on the migratory route. But a grander settlement seems to have been established at one stage en route in the southern Ethiopian Highlands immediately to the northeast of Lake Turkana (Cf. Ochieng, 1974:7). This might be the area that Kalenjin oral tradition calls *Burgeti*, meaning “warm.” The ancient Egyptians called that general area  which is sometimes transcribed *Punt*²⁴ or *Pwenet*, but which should perhaps be correctly transcribed *Punoot*, Kalenjin for “arrivals,” or “those in transit,” or “the people of the exodus” (Kipkorir, 1978:6)—called so in contrast with the *Ogieek*, which, as hinted by the Ethiopic *Ogaw*, probably meant “the original” or “indigenous inhabitants.” But the term *Ogieek* to the Kalenjin always referred to those impoverished hunter-gatherer forest-dwelling earlier settlers who were akin in many respects to the ancestors of the Kalenjin. These *Ogieek*, for the reason that they spoke a form of Kalenjin, may have either left the Nile Basin much earlier themselves or were part of the original parent stock of the ancient Egyptians. It is instructive in this respect that many Maasai and Kalenjin genesis stories have it that the first man on earth, and from whom the entire human race is descended, was an *Ogioot* (singular for *Ogieek*).

Certainly, linguistic and many other cultural traits and practices link the *Ogieek* intrinsically with the Kalenjin and with the ancient Egyptians alike. That said, however, the legend of *Misiri* seems to be singularly lacking in *Ogieek* tradition. They instead insist on and derive a certain amount of pleasure and prestige from their claim of indigenesness to their present forest localities (Cf. Blackburn, 1976:68ff). Discounting the possibility of unexplained but genuine widespread collective amnesia, the reason for the absence of the *Misiri* tradition from their lore, may be understood by taking into account the importance to them of staking indigenous claim to the forests. This could prompt the desire to be as indigenous to the forest domains as possible and the mind, for the sake of social and economic survival, then forgets every other tradition that mentions immigration. It is, of course, also possible that their claim as it stands is based on some pre-historical truth. But if they were migrants, like the rest of the Kalenjin-speaking peoples, then we must respect the Kalenjin elders’ popular tradition to the effect that the *Ogieek* were earlier arrivals who became impoverished over time as they gradually lost

²⁴ Budge’s Dictionary, 984a.

their livestock to both disease and theft. The Maasai name for the Ogieek, *Il Torobo*, “the impoverished ones,” is useful in understanding this viewpoint: that following such loss, therefore, they took to the forest and to the hunter-gathering economy and that they had then over the millennia intermarried with and adopted the minimum survival ways of even older and truly indigenous peoples who pursued this hunter-gathering type of survival economy (Cf. Seligman, 1966:16). The latter element may have been akin to the people who have derogatorily been called “Bushmen” in Southern Africa. This speculation is encouraged by the relatively lighter complexion of the Ogieek, their relatively lighter build, as well as their rather Mongoloid facial profile; the standard look of the average member of the Southern African population mentioned (Cf. Blackburn, 1976:63).

From every settlement on the proto-Kalenjiin’s migratory route, offshoots, led by young energetic men and followed subsequently by their women, would leave the more settled older ones behind, in the charge of their youngest siblings, this being a practice in accord with custom; and proceed with their exploratory adventures south. Those left behind in each major stop account for the presence there, today, of settlements of kin peoples which, when plotted on a map, describe and confirm, in the said linear manner, the direction of migration.

The next significant stop was the settlement around the foot of Mt. Kenya—which Kalenjiin oral tradition calls Mt. Koilegeen, which means “the marble stone mountain” owing to the variegated impression created by its permanent snowcap. They occupied almost the entire Central and parts of the Eastern Provinces of today’s Kenya, where the modern inhabitants of those areas remember some of the proto-Kalenjiin sections under the names Athi, Ghumba and Barabiu. They were here by 1000 AD. But the Athi, who were true Ogieek, may have arrived earlier (Cf. Muriuki, 1974:21,111,112).

The Bantu speakers arrived not long afterwards in Central Kenya and they lived in harmony with the earlier proto-Kalenjiin settlers for quite a while. Inter-marriage appears to have been rampant. Cultural and religious items were exchanged too—hence the obtaining situation whereby the Central Kenya Bantu-speaking people, such as the Agikuyu, adopted circumcision as well as three of the eight Kalenjiin circumcision age-sets in the correct sequence: *Nyoongi*, *Maiina* and *Chuumo* (Cf. Muriuki, 1974:39–40). This means that the *happy* coexistence lasted at least three circumcision generations, i.e. not less than forty-five years.

The strong proto-Kalenjiin cultural and political influence in central Kenya was later neutralised by a combined onslaught of Maasai and Gikuyu military alliance. Exodus ensued and those that were left behind were too weak to exert further cultural influence. Instead, they themselves were subjected to an assimilation process that lasted until our own times. As Maasai influence took the upper hand, the Agikuyu adopted the Maasai age grading system and superimposed it on the three age sets earlier obtained from the proto-Kalenjiin. The following is Dirk Berg-Schlosser’s (1984:47) summary of the same:

“The Kikuyu people probably moved into their present area of settlement about 1500 AD coming from the area further north-east of Mt. Kenya. In the new home area they partly dislocated the original inhabitants, probably mostly members of the “Dorobo,” a people of hunters and gatherers living in the forest. They also intermarried with this group, as they did with other neighbouring peoples, e.g. the Maasai and Kamba, so that today the Kikuyu are not a “pure” stock in any physical or genetical sense of the word.” Also see Seligman (1966:102) who says, “Many of the Bantu Kikuyu are no more pure Negroes than are the Nilo-Hamitic but sedentary Nandi.”

The same logic argues for a period of proto-Kalenjiin *effective influence* that was not longer than three circumcision generations, i.e., at the most: sixty or so years. This argument is supported by the fact that the western and south-western Kenya Bantu-speakers, such as most branches of the Abaluyia and those of the Abakuria who coexisted longer with the Kalenjiin, and still do, adopted circumcision culture as well as all the eight circumcision generations in the correct sequence: *Maiina*, *Chuumo*, *Saawe*, *Koroongoro*, *Kipkooimet*, *Kapleelach*, *Kimnyiigei*, and *Nyoongi* (see Were, 1967:4, 172). Professor Bethwell Ogot (1996:16) confirms this trend in the following unequivocal terms: “Even basic customs like circumcision was borrowed by the Luyia from the Kalenjin.” He goes on to cite Professor Gideon Were’s assertion that between thirty and forty percent of Abaluyia clans were originally Kalenjiin.

The main core of the proto-Kalenjiin left the Mt. Kenya region between the Fourteenth and the Sixteenth centuries AD, reportedly due to population pressure but probably owing to the arrival of a power that quickly established an alliance with the Mt. Kenya Bantu-speaking peoples. The new alliance was struck at the expense of the older proto-Kalenjiin allies of the Mt. Kenya Bantu-speaking peoples. The late powerful entrants to the central Kenya scene were the Maasai (Cf. Muriuki, 1974:21,65,111,112,124).

A number of the proto-Kalenjiin sections that remained in Central Kenya were later to be absorbed into Gikuyu, Meru, Embu, and Akamba Bantu-speaking peoples’ identities. The process of assimilation went on up to our own time. The Athi, Ghumba, Barabiu, and Maasai genes account for the distinctively modified physical characteristics of the Bantu speakers of today’s Central and Eastern Provinces of Kenya whose members, therefore, resemble other Bantu-speaking peoples of Africa less, physically as well as culturally. Names that run in the Gikuyu families such as Ngumba (from Ghumba-Ghumbieg), and in Kamba families such as Mwathi (from Athi), are relics, as well as reminders of the proto-Kalenjiin peoples that had settled in Central Kenya.

A substantial number of the proto-Kalenjiin sections, notably the Barabiu (Barabaig) and the Ghumba (Ghumbieg) that were not absorbed into Bantu culture, were gradually driven deep into Tanzania by the frontal sections of the rather voracious Maasai migrants who were expanding from northern and central Kenya into north-eastern Tanzania. The descendants of those proto-Kalenjiin sections that were driven there are still domiciled there, at the fringes of Tanzanian Maasailand.

Some of the larger proto-Kalenjiin sections that had earlier settled in Central Kenya, together with the fresh arrivals from Burgei, and others up the corridor of migration, moved in a westerly direction up to Mt. Elgon. Their former territory of Central Kenya had become a hostile environment for them. Their south-westerly migration from here had extended the corridor of migration that was to be used continuously up to the arrival of the colonising European powers in the late Nineteenth century. The elements of each fresh wave of immigrants referred to themselves as *Punoot* and sometimes fought with the earlier arrivals.

The period between the Fourteenth century and the Sixteenth century, is significant in that it was the epoch that saw the mainstream Kalenjiin communities of today, the last lot to refer to themselves, and who still do, as *Punoot*, leave Mt. Kenya area and Burgei in south-western Ethiopia for the Mt. Elgon area. This oft-narrated account of the complicated migratory movements is very close to the findings of a retired top U.S. Navy man who gave himself the task of finding out something about what he called the “Nilo Hamitic group.” Rear Admiral F.R. Dodge went further to attempt to describe the expansion of the Kalenjiin from Mt. Elgon. He is reported to have travelled up and down the places mentioned in the foregoing brief description of the migratory route:

“By my figuring, the Kipsigis, Nandi and Suk (Pokoot) (K.-S.-N.-), were practically one tribe some twenty generations ago, taking a generation as about 32½ years. They lived at the north-east end of Lake Rudolf (L. Turkana). The Maasai were already split off and living to the eastward of them. About this time, the Galla were being pushed west by the Somali and, as they approached, the Maasai had to move first, choosing to go southward along the east side of Lake Rudolf. Later the K-S-N group moved onto the Karamoja Plateau and gradually worked southward to the country just north of Mt. Elgon. Eventually the Karamoja and Teso came down from the north, whereupon the K-S-N group were forced to move out, about eight generations ago. The Suk split off around the north face of Elgon to about their present locations and the Kipsigis-Nandi went down to westward of Elgon and around south and up to the plateau, arriving there six or seven generations ago—say 1700. Here, the Kipsigis, Nandi, Tugen, etc. separated to their present localities and ran into the Maasai again” (DC/KER/4/1/1).²⁵

The proto-Kalenjiin elements that had been left behind at Burgei, to the north-east of Lake Turkana, about 1000 AD (Cf. Ochieng, 1974:7) were two or three centuries later swallowed up by hordes of Ethiopia’s Cushitic-speaking Oromo who were moving in from the east.²⁶ Those that could, eventually departed southward with their religion, language, and culture still largely intact. The language, in particular, was not left unscathed as modern Kalenjiin has a lot of Oromo/Somali in it. The interaction with the Cushites seems to have been, to an extent, on mutual terms, the reason being that the Borana (Oromo) and the Somali languages have many words

²⁵ Cited by T.L. Edgar (Kericho) in 1955.

²⁶ Cf. Rear Admiral Dodge’s account. Oromo is the self-name for the Galla mentioned above by Dodge. They also go by the name Borana on the Kenya side of the boundary.

that appear to be typical Hamitic (Kalenjiin/ancient Egyptian type) and even exhibit a few grammatical idiosyncrasies that appear to derive from proto-Kalenjiin. For example one grammatical feature shared between the Cushitic languages and Kalenjiin is the use of the singular form /t/ noun suffix. However, in Cushitic the /t/ suffix indicates that the noun is of feminine gender class while the Kalenjiin language uses this article as a definite article for singular nouns of the three grammatical genders. The plural forms of nouns that have the /t/ singular suffix generally end in /k/ suffix in both the Cushitic languages and Kalenjiin. In this respect Cushitic mirrors the Kalenjiin singular-to-plural system of inflection, except for the fact that Kalenjiin does not restrict this treatment to the feminine gender nouns as does Cushitic. It may be generalised that all Kalenjiin definite/indefinite singular noun forms, masculine, feminine or neuter, that end in /t/, must end with /k/ in their plural form and that for the Cushites—with a few exceptions—this rule applies only to feminine gender class nouns (Cf. Tucker & Brian 1966:511–513).

Another shared feature between the Cushitic languages and Kalenjiin occurs in the names for numbers: at least the numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, and 100 have similar names. However, in the important linguistic litmus test of “word order,” Cushitic exhibits a great disagreement with the Hamitic group of languages i.e., ancient Egyptian, Kalenjiin, Maasai, Turkana, Teso, etc. All the Hamitic languages *begin* their verbal sentences with the verb, but Cushitic *ends* such sentences with the verb. A sentence like “the man sees the lion” i.e., **Subject + Verb + Object** (SVO), would be rendered in Somali (Cushitic) in a form that literally translates as follows: “the lion the man sees,” i.e. **Object + Subject + Verb** (OSV). But Kalenjiin and the rest of the Hamitic family of languages, ancient Egyptian included, would render the same in what literally translates as: “sees the man the lion,” i.e. **Verb + Subject + Object** (VSO)—see Chapter 6. Thus whereas Hamitic is basically a VSO language grouping, Cushitic is basically an SOV language grouping (the former may alternate between VSO and VOS, while the latter may alternate between SOV and OSV—but note that both groups are adamant about their preferred position for the verb [Cf. Tucker & Bryan 1966:19 & 541]).

It is instructive that the community that now lives in the general area that may have been the heart of Burgei, to the north-east of Lake Turkana, still speaks a language that appears to be an ancient cross between Cushitic (the Oromo type) and Hamitic (the Kalenjiin type). They are called Geleba or Merrile, but prefer their self-name of Dathainich or Dathainik, both of which versions, together with Merrile, sound proto-Kalenjiin. Linguists have listed their language under Cushitic but admit that it is not a Cushitic language at all (e.g. Tucker & Bryan 1966:561).

Other living languages of the Burgei area that are conventionally classified Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic or Nilo-Saharan and which are not, therefore, Cushitic, exhibit close enough affinity with the Kalenjiin language as to have been one language a thousand or so years ago. Such are Majang, Muguj, Nyangatom, Anywa, etc. (Cf. Bender, 1975—general theme).

On arrival at Mt. Elgon, the proto-Kalenjiin that approached from Burgei across the Mt. Kenya region may have met with others who had approached from the Uganda side of Mt. Elgon, having followed the White Nile course up to Lake Victoria then turned eastward. These had survived the White Nile Nilotic influence and still wanted to reunite with their kin.

The ancestors of today's Kalenjiin later expanded from the nucleus of their Mt. Elgon abode. This was easterly and south-easterly fanning out from Mt. Elgon area into the present-day abodes, and into the sub-ethnic entities of the modern Kalenjiin nation. According to Rear Admiral Dodge above, and many oral sources—and supported by the age-set method of reckoning—this began about the Seventeenth century AD. Population pressure, attack from enemies, and the seeking of greener pastures were the reasons heard more often in explanation for the outward and far-flung expansion from the slopes of Mt. Elgon.

The Likely *Misrian* Abode of *Tto*

The *Tto* of Kalenjiin oral tradition seems to correspond to present-day Abusir in Egypt. Its classical Greek name was *Busiris*, while the ancient Egyptians themselves called it  *Ddw* (Gardiner 1927:604) or *Tto*.²⁷ The modern Arabic version, *Abusir*, and the classical Greek version, *Busiris*, both derive from ancient Egyptian  *Pa-Ausar* or *Per-Ausar* (Budge, 1895:cxxxvii). An idea of the correct pronunciation is suggested by the Coptic **ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲓ** “*Pusiri*: the sanctuary of Osiris” (B.Dict. 985b).

One of the military clans, from whose exclusive ranks the Pharaohs drew their soldiers, lived in the approximate region of *Tto* in old Saïtes, within and around the approximate area of the 9th Nome of Lower (northern) Egypt.²⁸ As we have already pointed out, these were the *Sebben* people whom Herodotus, the famed fifth century BC “Father of History,” mentions in his *Histories* (Book II Ch. 166). We know, from Chapter 1, that this is the name that the proto-Kalenjiin migrants knew themselves by up to Mt. Elgon. Others of their own, who are still domiciled at the slopes of this mountain, still go by that name—or variations of it: *Sabiiny*, *Sapiiny*, *Sabaoot*, or *Sebei*.

Sapiiny and *Sebei* almost definitely relate to  or  *Sapi* or  *Sapi meh*, referring to Sais, the capital of Saïtes (B. Dict. 1034a). The determinants of bow, shield, and arrows that characterise the above hieroglyphic renderings serve to confirm that indeed this was the location of a clan that was chiefly involved in warfare. This discussion on place-names is continued under Appendix 1 where we

²⁷ Budge assigns the value /t/ to the column  symbol and not /d/ as do both Gardiner and Faulkner. In any case, we shall later see that all /d/ sounds in Ancient Egyptian have since been rendered /t/ in Kalenjiin—excluding the Tatoog branches of Tanzania.

²⁸ That *Tto* was in the 9th Nome is gathered from Budge, 1895:cxxxvii.

also delve into place-name etymologies. There, the Kalenjiin language and the ancient Egyptian language are seen to yield similar interpretations, suggesting historical unity.

Assigning Reasons for the Departure from Egypt and a Time Frame

The Possible Reasons

According to Herodotus, the military clans—from among whom the Pharaohs came—were ranked at par in social esteem with the priestly clan, and every soldier was allocated a plot for the yearly crop. Although the priests often had massive influence over the Pharaohs, to the extent of occasionally usurping their power outright, it was the military clans that traditionally produced the Pharaohs and not the priestly clan. Because these two clans were ranked socially equal, there was the occasional rivalry. Herodotus narrates the story of the priest of Ptah who usurped power and began to demean the military clans, taking away their cultivation plots. The Assyrian king, Senacherib, afterwards attacked the priest-king and the military clans refused to defend him. However, he was lucky because before the Assyrians could depose him, mice ate their weapons and they had to beat a hasty retreat (Herodotus II: 141).

The occasional military clan/priestly clan power struggles as well as the innate feelings of insecurity and the widespread general mistrust of one another, e.g. kings worrying about the loyalty of their own soldiers, which is characteristic of a declining, decaying power, had the negative effects of further weakening, destabilising the country and causing disaffection and setting the stage for massive outward migration. The most affected under such circumstances would, naturally, be the military clans.

The author's most elderly informants, men and women of *Nyoongi* and *Maiina* age-sets (now over 110 and 100 years old respectively on the average) insisted that the Myoot (the proto-Kalenjiin) left Egypt to look for greener pastures—literally speaking—in the south. It is not in their psyche to associate those ancestors with the act of rebellion against the authority of the time—the Pharaoh. In fact, the Kalenjiin are an almost instinctively loyal and conservative people of a natural martial orientation (Cf. Matson, 1972:9).

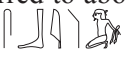
That said, the following people must, however, be somehow accommodated among the proto-Kalenjiin waves of immigrants to Eastern Africa: about 250,000 of Pharaoh's soldiers once deserted his army and marched several month's journey south of Egypt. This occurred approximately between the seventh and sixth centuries BC. They were soldiers of Pharaoh  Psamtik I.²⁹ Herodotus

²⁹ There were three kings named Psamtik of the XXVI dynasty 663–525 BC—name sounds like Kalenjiin **Psamitiik**, **Psamteek**? The Greek version suggests **Psamitiik**, for they called him, Ψαμμητιχος [**Psammiitik-os**—the -os ending is a common Greek addition upon names (Chronology MEE 98 and B.Dict. 940 ff.).

refers to those deserters of Psamitik's army as *asmach*, Greek for "those who stand on the left hand of the king." Herodotus noted that those deserters went to Ethiopia—which in his time meant Africa south of Egypt—married local wives and settled. "The result of their living there," he wrote, "was that the Ethiopians learned Egyptian manners and became civilised." (Book II Ch. 113).

Whether circumcision, certain cultural, religious, social and other formalised organisational institutions are representative of higher civilisation, is best left to conjecture. However, the widespread claim to the effect that the early Kalenjiin introduced certain aspects of their culture to this part of Africa—especially the socio-religious aspect of circumcision and its related age-set system—is amply corroborated orally by the neighbouring communities as well as by the Kalenjiin elders themselves. Many of those claims have been documented over the last century or so by various authorities working among these East African communities e.g. Seligman (1934:19). But of special importance is the corroborating evidence collected by eminent scholars who are themselves from within the communities that were reportedly so influenced, e.g. Prof. Godfrey Muriuki on the Agikuyu (1974:39–40) and Prof. Gideon Were on the Abaluyia (1967, various).

That said, however, conspicuously missing in the modern Kalenjiin elders' oral recollection is this question of having rebelled back in Egypt. They insist that their ancestors did not tell them about any rebellion on the part of those older ancestors who, they maintain, left Egypt thousands of years ago. But it must be remembered that people left Egypt, as indeed they did any other country, in several successive waves. It must be conceded that one of the waves was that of the "army deserting" group. The possibility also exists that the elders over the generations have chosen to suppress the legend of rebellion and the stigma that they may have perceived to be associated with it to the extent that it was finally left out of the oral tradition altogether.

Intriguingly, the ancient Egyptian word for "military rebel" is akin to *Sabaoot*—one name by which at least one of the proto-Kalenjiin waves of immigrants was known. *Sabaoot* is an ethnic term that stands side by side, if not interchangeably, with *Sabiiny* (which is also the name of one of the ancient Egyptian military clans referred to above). The ancient Egyptian words for "rebel" that are akin to *Sabaoot* are:  *sbi*;³⁰  *sheb-t*;  *sbi*, and the Coptic  (*shebioo*).³¹ It is to be noted that the hieroglyphic renderings have been transcribed without most of the vowels owing to the current level of knowledge of the hieroglyphs and the widespread belief within the discipline of Egyptology that the hieroglyphic writings were generally devoid of vowel representation. The reader's guess as to what to fill in by way of vowels is, therefore, as good as the author's. Whatever one ends up with should be read together with the Coptic version. The

³⁰. Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar, Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphics*, Griffith Institute, 1927, p. 443.

³¹. Budge's Dict. *ibid.*, p. 735b. & Faulkner's Dict. p. 220. It is also instructive to note that *Sabaoot*, of the Kalenjiin interpretation, also carries the notion "survivors" of war.

Coptic rendering is more reliable because it employs vowels whose values are known. However, unlike ancient Egyptian and most of the Kalenjiin dialects, Coptic lost the Hamitic definite article /t/ in most of its nouns and *Shebioo* may have contracted from *Shebioot*.

As Egypt gradually lost its pre-eminent position as the superpower of the then “known” world, the apocalypse of which took place during the XXVI dynasty—between 663 and 525 BC—it was natural for especially the direct losers of that power, the military section, out of the greater population, to progressively feel more disaffected. The “civilian” sections could easily re-adjust to and continue serving in their traditional servile roles under foreign military powers. But as for the military segments, mutiny, disaffection, and desertion would be common among their lot during such times of decline because the occupying alien powers must, of necessity, view them with suspicion. And it was the military clans that had lost the wars in the first place, anyway, notwithstanding the fact that loss may have resulted from misdirection and misuse by the commanding Pharaohs. The widespread frustration and the mass emigrations that followed from among their number were inevitable.

One such military setback, and the resulting frustration and disaffection on the part of the declining superpower of the ancient world’s army, was recorded by Herodotus. The Egyptian soldiers lost this one owing more to their arrogance and taking the opposing armies for granted, having held sway for at least a thousand³² years, than for any other reason—failure of the Pharaoh’s war medicine notwithstanding.

The Greeks, who had been studying the Egyptians quietly—if in total awe, mixed with admiration—for centuries, were this time round, 570 BC, more than able to take on their now fast-fading mentor and civilising power of old.

”.. For the Egyptians had as yet had no experience of Greeks, and despised their enemy; whereby they were so utterly destroyed that few of them returned to Egypt. For this mishap, and because they blamed (Pharaoh) Apries for it, the Egyptians revolted from him” (Herodotus IV: 159).

Before this historic military loss to the Greeks, the Egyptians had been weakened considerably by the forces of the Chaldean crown prince—later to become the legendary king Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon—through a massive loss to Nebuchadnezzar’s forces at Carchemish, Syria, in 605 BC (Asimov, 1967:122).³³ All the northern dominions of Egypt had been taken up by the then emerging powers of western Asia. The majority of these emerging powers had themselves been Egypt’s possessions a while earlier (Asimov, 1967:75). The rusting Egyptian empire had been pushed back to the present Sinai boundary. The buffer zones had

³² Cf. Isaac Asimov, 1967:75 and his “Table of Dates.”

³³ Almost 1000 years before this loss at Carchemish, Thutmose I of Egypt had conquered the same Carchemish and the Land of the Two Rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, whereupon “he planted a stone pillar testifying to his presence” (Asimov, 1967:75).

ka-Ra Psemthek (Angke

³⁶ Cyrene is in modern Libya.

unchallenged rulers of Egypt, the Pharaohs of the XXVI Dynasty then established their capital at Sais.

But ever feeling so insecure with their own people, they were unable to disengage themselves from dependence on foreign soldiery. These Pharaohs, beginning from Psamtik I through Psamtik II, Amasis III to the younger Psamtik III, had surrounded themselves with foreign troops as bodyguards against their own native troops. First, there were the Ionian and the Carian mercenaries that Psamtik I had used to depose contending Cushite-installed minor rulers of the Egyptian provinces and for consolidating his rule over the entire country. Herodotus says that these Ionians and Carians were the first foreign troops ever to settle on Egyptian soil (II:154).

Pharaoh Amasis kept the trust-in-mercenary policy, adding Greek soldiers to his bodyguard and a Greek wife to his household (Herodotus II: 181). The son of Amasis, Psamtik III, also kept the policy of reliance on foreign soldiers and so the soldiers, who were trying to defend Egypt at the time of the arrival of Cambyses of Persia, were the mercenaries. That is how alienated from one another the military institution and the kingship institution had become and hence further cause for emigration of sections of the military clans.

However, Herodotus demonstrates convincingly his belief to the effect that the skulls left at the scene of battle between the Persians and the Egyptians were of two different kinds. The skulls of Persian soldiers were brittle and broke easily when one dropped a stone on them while the skulls of the Egyptian soldiers were hard and did not break as easily upon dropping a stone on them. He ascribes this hard-skull quality to the Egyptians as a race. If we may believe him, then we may also believe that Psamtik III may have had many indigenous men fighting for him as well as that his foreign bodyguards descended from foreigners who had intermarried with locals over a generation or two (Cf. Snowden 1970:104).

The Timeframe and Geographical Corroboration from the Traces of Greek and Hebrew Influences on the Kalenjiin Language

If the “Kalenjiin-to-be” really left Egypt as a result of such disaffection with the status quo—namely that they were being replaced by Greek and other foreign mercenaries—then reason must be found to explain the extent of the apparent Greek influence on the Kalenjiin language. Considering the significant number of Greek loan words that are present in the Kalenjiin vocabulary, they seem to have left Egypt after the Greek influence had been in place long enough for the conquered to borrow and to internalise words to the extent they did. But the Pharaohs’ dependence on Greek mercenaries and the consequential opportunistic Persian conquest, were events that took place around the 7th and 6th centuries BC. The Greek influence was backed by political authority only from around the 4th century BC when Alexander “The Great” conquered Egypt.

However, it has been documented that the Greek were well established in Naucratis—a settlement in the Egyptian delta area—by the sixth century BC (Snowden 1970:103). The delta area is within the Sebenny location of the military clan, to whom reconstructed evidence and oral hints seem to link the proto-Kalenjiin. The proto-Kalenjiin may, therefore, have been in close contact with the Greek community of Naucratis for many centuries before the Greek-speaking Alexander “the Great’s” triumphant entry into Egypt in the fourth century BC.

Indeed, in order to have collected so much of Greek vocabulary, the ancestors of the Kalenjiin, in addition to such coexistence with Greek communities, must have lived under Greek and possibly Greco-Roman rule for a considerable length of time. However, the ancestors of the Kalenjiin seem to have left Egypt before the Roman rulers had banned the worship of and the sacrificial rituals associated with Isis in favour of Christianity, which the Romans did beginning from the reign of Constantine, 312/313 AD (Harris 1971:397). It was intensified during the reign of Theodosius (4th century AD) and most finally in the reign of Justinian (6th century AD) during which persecution on account of any vestiges of the worship of Isis, such as social organisation by *maat* and totemism, but which safely continued in the south under Asiisianism, were eradicated (Cf. Van Sertim, 1989:276).

It is important, for the purpose of dating, to note that the ancestors of the Kalenjiin did not adopt Christianity, neither did they abandon the rituals and social structures that were associated with the Isis kind of worship. Therefore, fixing the approximate date for the departure of the most significant batch of migrants at any point between the 7th century BC and the 6th century AD, that is having lived side by side with and later under Greek and Greek-speaking Romans for just over one thousand years, is feasible.

Let us look at some examples of possibly scores of words shared between Greek and Kalenjiin: Greek and Kalenjiin word **αρα** (*ara*), in both languages is used to introduce a question similar to the English “so” when it is used to introduce a question. This word in its sense of “after all” in Greek, is similarly applied in Kalenjiin; **νοεω** (*noeoo*), “understand,” “perceive,” “discern,” “think over,” etc. corresponds to Kalenjiin *nai* “know” and *nayo*, “knowledge” (English “know” is ultimately traceable to Greek); **λογια** (*logia*) “oracles,” “words,” “messages,” corresponds to Kalenjiin *logooi*, “words,” “messages,” “news,” etc. Add to this: **λογος** (*logos*) “something said,” e.g. “word”; “saying”; “message,” etc.; **αγκathi** (*angkathi*) “thorn,” compares to Kalenjiin *kata*, meaning “thorn”; **ματην** (*matin*) “in vain,” “to no purpose” means the same in Kalenjiin; **υδρια** (*hudria*) “water pot,” “water jar” survives in Kalenjiin as *ter*; **σιγαο** (*sigao*) “keep silent,” “be silent,” etc. is rendered in Kalenjiin *sisi-gee* and **φυσω** (*phusaoo*) “blow out” corresponds to Kalenjiin *i-puus*, “breathe.” There are many more words shared by the Greek and Kalenjiin languages. However, some of the shared words seem to be of ancient Egyptian origin that entered Greek. Definite examples of such words are: **μαρτυριον** (*marturion*) “witness,” “testimony,” “evidence,” “proof,” etc. which

survives in Kalenjiin as *motir* or *motiryoon*—from ancient Egyptian  *mtr* and Coptic ⲙⲁⲣⲧⲓⲣⲓⲁ (*martiria*); ὥρα (*horaoo*) “see,” Kalenjiin *iroo*, the same in Coptic is ⲓⲟⲣⲏ (*ioorh*).

The ancestors of the Kalenjiin, who are often referred to here as Myoot, for that is one of the collective names for themselves that they used until recently, no doubt also met and coexisted with the Hebrews. The contact lasted for a period of time long enough for the Myoot to have borrowed and internalised a large number of Hebrew words. Of course some of the Kalenjiin words that are traceable to Hebrew may themselves have ultimately been derived from the ancient Egyptian language, the latter, therefore, being just a common source to both Kalenjiin and Hebrew. Whatever the case may have been, the Kalenjiin-Hebrew cognates point to a northern influence on the Kalenjiin language—a further living proof of their *Misiri* origin claim.

The following are examples of Hebrew words in Kalenjiin (a vice versa situation may not be ruled out however): Hebrew בָּרַק *barak*, which means “lightning,” and רָקִיעַ *raki’a*, “heaven,” are obvious relations of the Kalenjiin *barak* or *parak* which is the latter’s word for “sky,” “heavens” and places of high elevation, etc.; תְּלֹלִית *telulit*, “mound,” which may be compared with Kalenjiin *tul-weet*; Hebrew בָּעַר *ba’ar*, “ignoramus,” “fool,” corresponds to Kalenjiin *berber*. So do the nouns created from this common adjective: בְּעָרוּת *ba’arut*, “stupidity,” “ignorance” corresponding with the Kalenjiin *berberyeet*, “stupidity,” “ignorance”—this Kalenjiin *berberyeet* is also phonetically very close to the Hebrew word for “barbarism,” בְּרִבְרִיּוּת *barbariyut*. Then we have אֶרֶץ *eret* “country” which corresponds to Kalenjiin *koor-eet* “land/division/country”; כֵּנָה *kinna* “name,” “call,” “designate” corresponds to Kalenjiin *kaaana* “name” (n); קָטָן *katan* “small” corresponds to Kalenjiin *kiteen/kitigiin* “small”; כֹּל *kol* “all,” “whole” corresponds to Kalenjiin *tugul* “all,” “whole”; אָמֵן *amen* “amen” corresponds to Kalenjiin *iman* “it is true/so be it” and is related to אֱמֶת *emet* “truth” which the Kalenjiin render *imanit* “the truth”; רָאָה *ra’a* “see,” “look” perfectly corresponds to Kalenjiin *i-roo* and יָרֵחַ *yare’akh* “moon/month” is rendered *araawa* in Kalenjiin. There are many more Kalenjiin-Hebrew shared words and this relationship occasionally extends to noun formation such as is demonstrated by the shared adjective for “ignorant” and the shared noun formed from it, meaning “ignoramus.” The unique Kalenjiin (and related) Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) word order also corresponds to old Hebrew and other old Semitic branches’ word order (Loprieno 1995: 3. The Old Hebrew VSO preference was confirmed by Prof J.P. van der Westhuizen to the author in person and in a conference paper *Subject initial Position in the Shechem Amarna Letters*, 11th Annual Conference of the Southern African Society for Semitics, September 1998).



Picture 15(a): The distant picture of the pyramid of Ngundeng, the Nineteenth century king of the Nuer.



Picture 15(b): The close-up picture of the pyramid of Ngundeng, the Nineteenth century king of the Nuer. The Nuer country is hardly 200 kilometres north of the Kenya-Sudan boundary. The pyramid is thought to have been initiated by Ngundeng around 1900 AD and completed by his son Gwek. This pyramid is called Deng Kur and is the biggest in the Nuer country. Constructed of baked earth and ashes, it was estimated by the pioneering European colonial officers to be 50 feet high and 300 feet in circumference—surrounded fully with ivory tusks planted into the ground. More tusks were buried in the centre. The pyramid culture was, therefore, not confined to Egypt, as is corroborated by the Deng Kur pyramid, and is, in fact, thought to have originated far to the south. *The picture is from Seligman, 1932, and was taken by Dr Crispin around 1900 AD.*

The Kalenjiin Language after Egypt

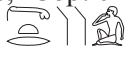
According to Diop, almost all the black Africans can claim the Nile Valley to be their cradle-land. He says that the legends, the languages, the customs, the beliefs of all the African populations link them to the common original cradle, which is the Nile Valley (Cf. 1996:53). Indeed, most African cultures, legends, etc. are similar. Only language betrays subtle differences and in fact other linguistic classes are no longer readily traceable to the Nile Valley. The speakers of such languages may have lost their Nilotic tongues and adopted the speech of peoples that were more aboriginal to areas of Africa in which they now find themselves. A clear example of such development that is almost within memory is the case of the Tutsi. Other examples farther afield may be the Zulu, the Xhosa, the Ndebele, the Sotho, etc., all of whom are supported in this claim to the Nile Valley as cradle more by their customs, cultural practices and legends than by their languages.

For the reason that much of Africa can lay claim to the Nile Valley as the common cradle-land, Diop (1996:40) proposes that ancient Egypt is to Africa what ancient Greece is to Europe, that is, that Africa takes all cultural, historical and linguistic bearings from ancient Egypt. “We could even, at a pinch, consider (ancient) Egyptian as a dead language and, for geographical, historical reasons, build our humanities on Egyptian foundations—the same way the Greek language is at the foundation of humanities in western civilisation.”

However, to the extent that the Kalenjiin language and other living Nilo-Saharan languages can be considered direct successors of the ancient Egyptian language, that language may not be designated as quite dead although its use as source of technical terms in the whole of Africa, as suggested by Diop, is still an attractive suggestion. Death cannot be made a precondition for its acceptance as a common heritage for all Africans. All the same, discussing it in posthumous terms is only inevitable and the habitual thing to do when we take into consideration long and wide usage by scholars and fans of ancient Egypt.

Otherwise, the Myoot people brought their dialect of that language with them southward and exposed it to other southern languages. During that exposure, dynamic lending and borrowing took place. But unlike what we shall shortly see happening to Coptic vis-a-vis the Greek language, the basic Hamitic structure of Kalenjiin was retained in spite of the assault it faced from several southern languages that had entirely different language structures and vocabulary. Kalenjiin has borrowed some of the vocabulary items from these languages just as it has lent to them, but, more than others, the Kalenjiin speakers have kept the Pharaonic speech truly alive.

Probably owing to the said massive Greek influence, Coptic lost, among other features, the Hamitic definite singular noun suffixal article /t/. Ancient Egyptian texts exhibit this feature and, as in Kalenjiin, the definite singular nouns and gerunds are characterised by the suffixal article /t/. It has to be remembered that Coptic is lacking this suffix by omission; it is not that both Kalenjiin and Pharaonic

Egyptian have it by commission. For an example, Coptic ⲙⲉⲧⲣⲏ (*metrii*), “instructor,” “witness,” from Pharaonic Egyptian verb  *mtr*, “instruct,” is retained in Kalenjiin as: *motir*, “instruct” (especially as part of initiation into the next social grade or class); but the Kalenjiin refer to the witness/instructor as *motir-yoot* and the action of witnessing rituals as an official, or training initiates, as *motir-eet*, which is ancient Egyptian  *mt(r)t*, “testimony” (F.Dict. 121). Note that the appended suffix in the Kalenjiin context, and probably in the ancient Egyptian context as well could, in some cases, be very long. The /t/ suffix does not come alone; it comes with one or more vowels and even consonants in certain cases.

Although the Kalenjiin people have kept the Pharaonic tongue truly alive, for the reason of absence of writing and preservation over many centuries, the stock of the original Egyptian vocabulary in Kalenjiin has shrunk gradually. While most authentic Kalenjiin words can be traced back to ancient Egyptian sources, the reverse is not the case. The ancient Egyptian vocabulary is so much larger than the living Kalenjiin stock that uncountable Egyptian words cannot be traced in modern Kalenjiin, especially the technical words to do with marine, lake, or river life and traffic. To this effect, Dr Taaitta araap-Toweett, the late pre-eminent Kalenjiin scholar (of linguistics), pointed out, at a symposium convened by The Davy Koech Foundation in February 1994, that the Kalenjiin language, as far as he knew, had only one word for all fish, *njir-yoot*! However it has turned out that there are one or two other Kalenjiin words for “fish,” e.g.. Coptic’s ⲕⲟⲩⲁⲃⲟⲩ *kulhot*, “a type of fish” (Crum 107) is preserved in the Keiyo (Soi) word for “fish” *kawalyaat*—from Distefano, 1985 basic words gloss. Pokoot word for “fish” is *koogh-wa*, plural *kagha* (Beech, 1911). Toweett may have been right, therefore, to the extent that each dialectal group possesses only one word for all species of fish.

The huge difference in the size of the available stock of words, as regards both languages, is to be expected because the Egyptian language was recorded and preserved over several thousand years during which time, being so dynamic, it received and coined new words. The form of ancient Egyptian that has been preserved is cumulative, therefore, while the much shrunken Kalenjiin language of today is only a probable southern remnant of it. Considering the great extent of basic word sharing that exists between ancient Egyptian/Coptic and Kalenjiin—as will be demonstrated in Chapter 6—it would appear, statistically speaking, that inside the vast Pharaonic mega-language, 86% of the entire Kalenjiin vocabulary is to be found. The 14% deficit would represent words of recent coinage and those borrowed from the East African neighbouring languages which are, essentially, of non-Hamitic origin. Many of such words are within the context of agriculture and vegetables. Examples are: *isageek*, *isoiik*, *inderemeek*, etc., whose common initial /i/ syllable would tend to point to a Bantu origin.

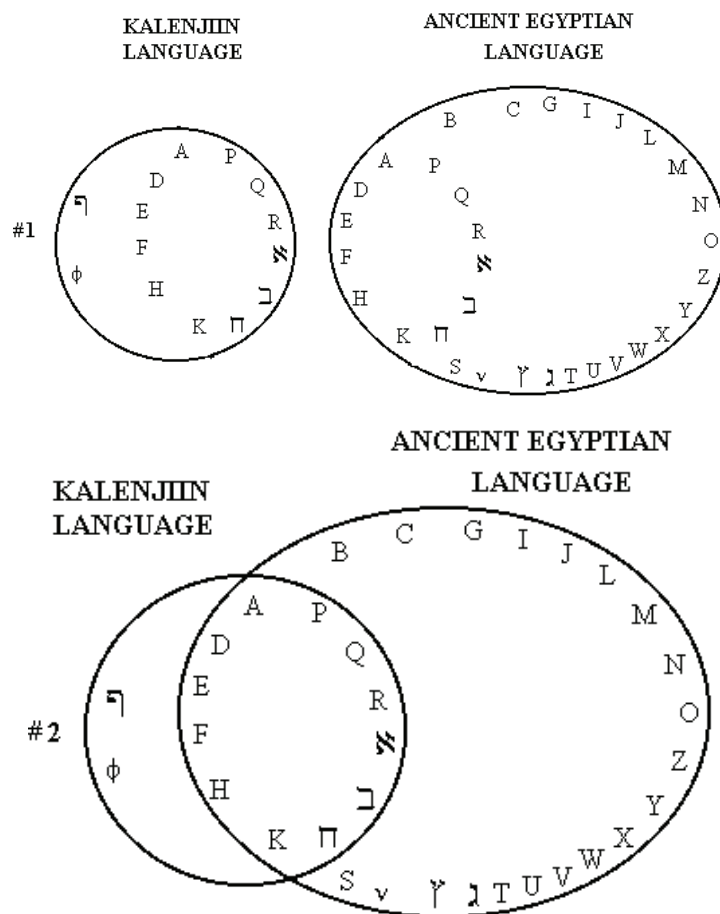


Figure 1: Mathematical model

The mathematical model in figure 1 represents a purely hypothetical case based on a true scenario. The figure shows the nature of relationship between the ancient Egyptian language and the Kalenjiin language based on basic word stock sharing as demonstrated in Chapter 6. If every letter in this hypothetical case represented 1000 words, then ancient Egyptian would have a stock of 32,000 words while Kalenjiin would have a stock of only 14,000 words because it is much shrunken. Out of Kalenjiin's 14,000 imaginary stock, 12,000 would be known to, and be derived from, ancient Egyptian while 2,000 would be unknown to ancient Egyptian because they would have been acquired later either through invention or through borrowing from southern languages. But Kalenjiin, in its present stage, would have lost, or would be unaware of, at least 20,000 ancient Egyptian words because they were acquired or invented after departure or have just been lost to Kalenjiin through attrition and atrophy over great lengths of separation time. Scenario number 1 shows the relationship a priori, i.e. before comparative study work and scenario

number 2 shows the relationship a posteriori, i.e. after the comparative work is completed and a certain level and nature of relationship has been established. What this means is that for every Kalenjiin lexical item, there is a theoretical 86% chance that it will be found in an ancient Egyptian or Coptic dictionary, but the converse is not true. A search, therefore, is best begun from the shrunken “daughter” language and not the other way round.

CHAPTER 4

And Who are the Egyptians?

Ancient Egyptian Society as an Extension of Nilotic Africa

If we were to go by the mass of long-available literary material on the ancient Egyptians, we would think it unnecessary to make a fresh introduction, or even definition, of them as we did with regard to the Kalenjiin in the early parts of this section. But perhaps the assumption that they are too familiar to need introduction would be unfair to readers who are just now getting introduced to a long-established field of knowledge. Besides, few sources discuss the ancient Egyptian society as an extension of interior Africa in general and as an extension of interior Nilotic Africa in particular, the way we intend to do in the following brief introduction and throughout the project. We introduce the ancient Egyptians as they relate to our theme, i.e., inasmuch as they go to corroborate the Kalenjiin people's claim of descent from them.

As a major element in the introduction of the Kalenjiin, much has already been said about the ancient Egyptians. It will, hopefully, be clear soon enough that we are only discussing the other side of the same socio-historical coin in what must amount to a continuous discussion. Further evidence of physical types, linguistic, and material culture will be of interest to us here.

The pre-eminent American Egyptologist, James Henry Breasted (1908:30), notes that the earliest graves of ancient Egyptians that were being opened early in the Twentieth century yielded:

“pre-dynastic Egyptians who were dark-haired people, already possessed of rudiments of civilisation. The men wore a skin over the shoulders, sometimes skin drawers, and again only a short white linen kilt... the women were clothed in long garments of some textile, probably linen, reaching from the shoulders to the ankles. Statuettes of both sexes without clothing whatever are, however, very common... They occasionally tattooed their bodies.”

Breasted goes on to remark: “The representations of the early Puntites, or Somali people, on the Egyptian monuments, show striking resemblances to the Egyptians themselves.” From his brief statements, therefore, we get a glimpse of two typically black-African attributes namely that the ancient Egyptians' hair was dark and that they resembled other black people like the people of Punt and/or Somalia. And, as we saw in the Chapter 2, nudity, as far as the Nilotic peoples in general were concerned, was nothing to be ashamed of.



Picture 16: A very long, narrow-sleeved linen dress from a 5th Dynasty (2500–2200 BC) tomb at Deshashesh. It is similar to what is described as a typical Pharaonic women's wear by Breasted here. It is clear from this picture that modern man has added little by way of innovation in textile design over the last 4500 years or so (Picture from the Petrie Museum of Archaeology, London—Biblical Archaeologist, December 1984). Compare the length of dress with that of Chapkwe, Picture 5.

Paul Jordan (1976:141) describes the same dress specifications for both sexes as above and also mentions the ancient Egyptians' propensity to nudity, which, as we saw with respect to the other Nilotic peoples, the Kalenjin included, was the custom up until and long after the arrival of the colonial government whose officers described it in their anthropological books. Says Jordan: "People engaged in any sort of manual labour, including girls working in the corn fields, went practically naked."

As did the Kalenjin up until only a few decades ago, the ancient Egyptians found pride in wearing skins. Perhaps as pastoralists, basically, who loved their animals almost to the point of worshipping them, no other material—excepting the skins of prestigious wild animals like lion and leopard; the colourful ones like those of the colobus monkey; the furry ones, like those of hyrax—was more reassuring. Jordan (1976:141) notes that "skins must have been the earliest Egyptian form of clothing in pre-dynastic times and the skin of one animal in particular, the leopard, went on being worn—in a spirit of religious conservatism—as part of ceremonial priestly costume until the last days of ancient Egypt."

The emphasised leopard skin, with tail intact (called in Kalenjin, *siir*, pl. *siirek*), worn by men, hanging from the neck and falling on the back, is still common sight in Kalenjinland during traditional celebrations. However, the Kenya Government, with wildlife conservation in mind, has outlawed the ownership of wildlife trophies through legislation and only overlooks it when dancers dressed in these garments make an appearance to entertain dignitaries on national days.

Nevertheless, all the foregoing said, we need to remember that:

"The historical Egyptians were great exponents of spinning and weaving linen cloth (although they are also known to have worn woolen clothes) and tools of the trade that have survived, as well as the wall paintings, show that their

techniques differed little from the traditional crafts of today” (Jordan, 1976:141).

Spinning and weaving are technologies that the Kalenjiin do not appear to have possessed in their East African setting, for they remained content with the pre-dynastic Egyptian type of skin garments up until and considerably into colonial times in certain areas. But the conversion to cloth was rather quick in most areas, especially for the youth who loved sheets. From the speed of conversion to cloth, we may suspect that a lingering knowledge of textile manufacture had all along remained with the people, either subconsciously or occasionally in practice. This argument is strengthened by the fact that the Maasai, who are not quick to change, uncharacteristically also turned to sheet linen immediately the Arab and European traders brought them and have since been reluctant to change to other types of cloth, such as trousers and shirts. Western-made beads also had met with easy acceptance among the Kalenjiin and the Maasai alike. With these, they made jewellery similar to those worn by the ancient Egyptians.

On top of the physical and cultural evidence of resemblance, Henri Frankfort (1948:348) makes the following important statement, which also excludes ancient Egyptians linguistically and culturally from the Semitic family and declares them linguistically and culturally one with the Hamites and “half-Hamites” of sub-Saharan Africa. Hamites and “half-Hamites” are designations into which the early anthropologists, as we have seen, lumped the Maasai, the Kalenjiin, etc. as well as the Bahima of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi:

“Linguistic comparisons allow us to call this East and North African substratum of ancient Egypt “Hamitic”... The material and spiritual culture of ancient Egypt differs throughout from the ancient civilisations of Semitic-speaking peoples and shows striking similarities to that of the Hamites and half-Hamites of Africa.”

But according to Breasted (1908:29) the ancient Egyptian language acquired a Semitic structure “although it was coloured by its African antecedents.” It will be seen later on, however, that the ancient Egyptian language, as Frankfort argues above, is not Semitic in structure although it may have incorporated some Semitic loanwords just as all languages borrow and lend words. The latter stage of ancient Egyptian, Coptic, also exhibits little by way of Semitic characteristics but instead borrows heavily from Greek, although it remains essentially a typical language of Nilotic Africa.

Among the cultural items that modern Eastern Africa shares with ancient Egypt, according to Frankfort, is the *macien* or *kamar*, the respective Dinka and Kalenjiin names for the pet bull, or ox, with artificially deformed horns. In Old Kingdom tombs, these bulls—which Frankfort takes the liberty to call *macien* and *kamar*—are depicted among the bulls or oxen brought to the dead man (Cf. Frankfort, 1948:165).

Correctly, if one may say, Frankfort (1948:348) goes on to declare that other Africans from elsewhere bore similar affinities too:

“On the whole, I have avoided adducing West African features and confined myself to modern peoples who show affinities to the ancient Egyptians in language or in physique or both. But Hamitic influence is found in Africa well beyond these limitations.”

What Frankfort says above confirms our earlier assertion to the effect that ancient Egypt was a microcosm of Africa, ethnically speaking.

For his part, Breasted (1908:29) considers the ancient Egyptians a fusion “of Libyans and East Africans” and other Nile Valley peoples. Theirs was, therefore, according to him, not only a society that was microcosmic of Africa but it was also a society caught in an African melting-pot process that continued far into historic times. However, Breasted has here ignored the ageless desert route to West Africa through Timbuktu, which saw migratory traffic move in both directions between North-east and West Africa. Frankfort also alluded to that fact even though he declares Eastern Africa’s current Nilotic populations to be his favourite example.

Again, according to Breasted (Cf. 1908:29), other additions into the Egyptian melting pot came by way of the Semites who entered Egypt through the isthmus of Suez—the same route that the invading Arabs were to use several thousand years later.

We should not expect the ancient Egyptian populations to have been uniform either from the social or from the physical point of view at all times and from region to region. Like all other peoples of the world, they were subject to influence from their neighbours, especially upon the communities that lived along the borders. Ancient Egypt was divided into many nomes, but more famous were the divisions into two kingdoms, north and south. The northern kingdom exhibited distinct Libyan influence while we would expect the south to have likewise exhibited greater southern hinterland influence. The northern kingdom, headquartered in Buto, loved the colour red and its treasury was called the “Red House,” while the south favoured the colour white and its treasury was appropriately called “White House.” (Cf. Breasted, 1908:34).

Modern Egyptian Society, the Copts, and the Coptic Language

The Coptic language, together with the religious culture of the Copts of Egypt, who have now spread all over the world, continue to be a reliable source of information for this study. The religious and nationalistic tenacity of this ancient of peoples, in the face of overwhelming odds, continues to confound many. “Today, the Coptic Christian population of Egypt constitutes a substantial minority of about 7 million, although official government statistics reduce this figure” (MEE 98/23).³⁷ This minority population likes to identify itself with *ancient* Egypt to a greater degree

³⁷ “Coptic” is an anglicised form of the Greek renderings *Kiptaios* or *Coptos*.

than do the vast majority of modern Egyptians who, being Muslims—90 per cent of the population—generally appear to regard themselves as Arabs.



Picture 17: *Professor Dr Zaki Shenouda (left), then Director of the Institute of Coptic Studies, and the author, exchange notes in the papal residence, Cairo, 1993. Professor Shenouda praised the author's understanding of the Coptic language and especially his Coptic handwriting. The professor is noted for translating many important books from French, English, and Coptic into Arabic. The professor passed on in 1998—Picture by a staff of the Papal See.*

The Copts, however, are cautious not to overemphasise their greater claim to Pharaonic ancestry, perhaps lest they should inadvertently paint themselves as the legitimate heirs to Egypt and the rest but tenants. They could easily alienate the majority population of Arab extraction and, in the process, attract an Islamic backlash that they cannot handle (Cf. Reid, 1985:242). They walk a tight rope in their own ancestral land therefore and often, in fact, fall prey to political extremists who would wish to ethnically or religiously cleanse the land.

The Egyptian Arabs' identification with Arabia, links them back to the Arabian peninsula, the cradle of Islam. It brings with it an indifference to Pharaonic Egypt but they nevertheless, "adopt the trappings of pharaonism to cater to European tastes" (Cf. Reid, 1985:235) and tourism, constituting such a large chunk of the economy, this is only understandable. It is worth noting that virtually all the currency notes in circulation in modern Egypt (during author's visit, 1993) are inscribed in English on one side and in Arabic on the reverse side. The side with English inscriptions invariably carries portraits relating to the ancient Pharaonic (non-Arabic) Egypt, while the side containing Arabic inscriptions, numbers, etc. — and which is, therefore, meant to be of convenience to the Arabic-speaking user—

invariably carries portraits of Islamic landmarks such as the magnificent old mosques. This, therefore, probably illustrates the fact that before non-Arab outsiders, the modern Egyptian Muslim who, for all practical purposes, wields all political power, presents “Pharaoh,” but in an all-Arab context, they are Muslim Arabs who are proud of their Arabian Peninsula roots and their illustrious, conquering ancestors—who would not!

A conference was held in Cairo in 1974 on “the peopling of ancient Egypt and the deciphering of the Meroitic script.” The great Senegalese scholar, Cheikh Anta Diop, and his associate from Congo, Theophile Obenga, attended it. The black duo expounded their conviction to the effect that the ancient Egyptians were black. This they did in front of a conference audience whose non-indigenous African attendees overwhelmed them in the ratio of about ten to one. The Egyptian delegates were six and they all reportedly opposed this view vehemently: “The Egyptians did not think that their ancestors were black and felt sure that movements of civilising influence in the Nile Valley went from north to south rather than the other way” (Cf. MacGaffey, 1991:515–519).

We are not told about the ethnic composition of the protesting Egyptian delegation, i.e., out of the six, how many were Copts (of native Egyptian ancestry) and how many were Muslim Arabs (immigrants from the Arabian Peninsula—see further below). All the same, perhaps because of the connotation of impurity, nobody, if she or he can help it, likes to be the one from a mixed racial heritage—especially at the greater ancestral level. And, in the experience of the author, when admittance has to be made by the modern Egyptians, the Greek, Roman, Turkish, and Arab input components might be mentioned, but not the black component. However, since they resemble the unambiguously mixed Arab-African population of the Kenyan coast most completely, we are left to infer what the obvious taboo component was.

Volney, as we saw in Chapter 2, considers the indigenous component of modern Egyptians a product of black and white parentage, for that is the definition of the word mulatto, when he says: “They all have a bloated face, bulging eyes, a flat nose, thick lips, in short, a real mulatto face” (1787:74—Diop, 1996:122). The “white parentage” that Volney mentions here could only represent an element from outside of Africa. By simple deduction, given the earlier absence of the element of “white parentage,” we are left with the black parentage as the indigenous element typical of the ancient population of Egypt.

That deduction is supported by the evidence of the ancient Egyptians’ unambiguous depiction of themselves in their “gods,” etc. on tomb walls, in statuettes, in other monuments, and on papyri as black people. The eyewitness account of the 5th century BC visitor to Egypt, Herodotus (Book II), supports the evidence that is enshrined in those monuments.

We encountered, in Chapter 2, and need now to recall briefly, two instances in which Herodotus alluded definitively to the blackness of the ancient Egyptians. In

one instance he tries to explain the origin of the Colchians and acknowledges their oral tradition that they came from Egypt, pointing out that their tradition of Egyptian origin had to be true because they were black like the Egyptians of his time. In the other instance, Herodotus infers that a black dove that Greek legend spoke about and to which they attributed the construction of the shrine of Amon in Greece, was, in fact, a black human priestess and not a dove. That because she was said to have been black, she had to have been Egyptian.

If we must respond briefly to the claim of the protesting Egyptian delegates to the said conference, who say that civilisation was a one-way business: from Egypt to the south, we will need to remember that this was Seligman's favourite view, of which the Dutch-American Egyptologist, Frankfort (1948:383) says: "Seligman has unfortunately retained the prejudice that resemblances between ancient Egypt and modern Africa are due to influences emanating from Egypt, even though he admits our inability to explain it."

According to Frankfort (1948:165–166) then:

"Egypt retained this heritage (of artificially deforming horns of special bulls and oxen—the *kamar*) of its prehistoric African origins, and modern times, when remnants of the Hamitic substratum of Egyptian culture still continue it (i.e. the Pokoot Kalenjiin whom Frankfort calls "Suk," etc.). (And so) the black African background which we have indicated does explain the extraordinary role which cattle play demonstrably in the spiritual life of the Egyptians.

There are other examples of ideas flowing from south to north—in the manner of the River Nile itself—some of which we have mentioned, e.g., the very idea of a pyramid, or what we have seen Martin Bernal (1987:15) refer to as elements of civilisation "whose African origins are uncontested."

As already communicated, in Chapter 2, it is not the wish of the author to highlight or to unnecessarily dwell on the issue of the "racial" divisions of Africa. The evils of excessive racial and ethnic consciousness are well known. However, the question that must be lingering in every reader's mind here is that of the "racial, social, and geographical distance" between the Kalenjiin-speaking people and the current population of the land that they claim was their cradle-land. It would be naïve to imagine that a topic of the nature that this book deals with could be discussed while surgically eschewing matters of ethnicity altogether. Even if the question is not asked explicitly by readers, it certainly remains uppermost in their minds and must, therefore, be addressed.

That said, following are two examples, recorded by history, of how Egypt, a country that was originally devoid of Arabs; became an Islamic Arab country:

- (1) "Unlike Syria and Iraq, Egypt seems to have had no Arab inhabitants before the advent of Islam. Arab colonisation began with the conquest, and was encouraged by the Umayyad Caliphs, notably by Hisham (reigned 724–43 AD), who in 727 authorised the planned migration and

settlement of several thousand Arabs of the Yemenite tribe of Qays in the Nile Valley. During the eighth and ninth centuries, large numbers of Arab tribesmen, mainly of Yemenite origin, migrated to Egypt, where many of them were settled on the land” (Harris 1971:457).

- (2) “The great invasion of the eleventh century are on quite a different level (from the smaller migrant numbers of conquering Arab soldiers of 641 AD); especially does this hold of the migration of the Beni Hillal (and kindred tribes) who in 1048 were launched by the vizier of the Fatimid Caliph Mustansir against his master’s more orthodox vassals in North Africa. Each man was provided with a camel and given a gold piece, the only condition being that he must settle in the west... This well exemplifies the process of Arabisation in North Africa, and it was to a large extent an eastern and southern reflux from the Hillalian invasion that had most to do with the Arabisation of the Nile Valley and is thus responsible for much of the present-day distribution of the Arab tribes of the Sudan” (Seligman, 1966:151–152).

The influence of Arab blood diminishes progressively as one moves southward along the Nile Valley. This phenomenon may have a great deal to do with the huge distance between the northern entry point of Arab and other assorted immigrants and the southern region of Egypt. The obvious outward manifestation of this phenomenon was not lost to Seligman (1966:152):

“... The less mixed Arabs are found in the predominantly ‘European’ north and east, while in the south and west are those people who, although calling themselves Arabs, inhabit areas in which the Negro is or has been dominant, and thus carry much Negro blood.”³⁸

So much then for the Egyptian delegation’s denial that some of their ancestors were black.

The Coptic Language

The Coptic stage of Egyptian represents various dialects of the ancient Egyptian language, or languages, as spoken immediately before and during the early centuries AD. This language stage is not different in any profound way from the older stages of Egyptian, but it portrays major external influence. The influence, as we mentioned above, necessarily came with Greek—and Roman—colonisation of Egypt as well as with the Christian religion. This religion came into being in the first century AD and found an Egypt under Roman colonialism, supervised by a Greek-speaking administration. Greek was then the language of the administration and of the elite across much of the Roman Empire.

Consequently, the Coptic language incorporates a lot of Greek loan words. Almost as a rule, such loan words seem to be of the technical-terms type (of the theological

³⁸ Seligman “mischievously” equates the words “European” and “Arab” here, the message being: the less the Arab is mixed, the more he is European.

context). The influence was, in fact, hardly restricted to word borrowing alone. The Greek influence upon the Coptic language was so extensive that in some cases, even the Pharaonic grammar was compromised. The Kalenjiin language is not entirely devoid of Greek loanwords either, as we demonstrated in Chapter 3. But the basically Hamitic grammar that underpins the Kalenjiin language was not compromised as in the case of the grammar of the Coptic language.

When St. Mark introduced Christianity in Egypt around 61 AD, the language he used in speech and in writing (or causing to be written what was to become the Gospel according to him) was Greek. However, he was himself originally an African Jew, born in Cyrene (Masri 1987). Cyrene was a major Libyan city of Mark's time. Mark communicated in Greek because anyone who "mattered" then spoke and wrote in the prestigious language of the time, Greek.

Towards the end of the second century AD, two Egyptian native scholars and teachers, Pantaenus and Clement, under instruction from the church, developed the Coptic Script. This was largely derived from Greek characters, but they added seven letters of their own—from the Egyptian Demotic script. The native letters were needed in order to represent Egyptian sounds that were strange to Greek. These two did not only translate St. Mark's teachings and the catechism, but they also translated the Old and the New Testament into Egyptian—becoming the first people ever to translate the text from Greek into their native tongue (Masri, 1987: ch.2 par. 19).

Thereafter the hordes of ordinary Egyptians, so reached by the Word, turned to Christianity:

“Their hearts and minds opened up to It for It embodied some of their already accepted beliefs, such as immortality, resurrection and the soul's judgement. Inscriptions in certain of the Egyptian tombs, such as those written in the tomb of Petosiris, for example, ring with a note very reminiscent of certain biblical passages” (Masri 1987: ch.3 par. 19).

Writings by Pantaenus, Clement, and others by subsequent scribes, using the largely Greek script but in the Egyptian dialects of the time are referred to as Coptic literature. The language dialects used are considered as dialects of Coptic. Roughly dividing Egypt into five horizontal belts, running east to west, starting from the north we have: Bohairic Coptic (very common in the present Coptic literature); Memphite Coptic; Fayumic Coptic; Akhmimic Coptic and Sahidic Coptic. The Sahidic Coptic dialect is common in the more ancient texts.³⁹

The differences between these dialects are petty, considering the age covered and, for our purpose, the Kalenjiin language is more or less equally related to at least the two most-used Coptic dialects in the present church, i.e. Bohairic and Sahidic. Throughout this text, therefore, the two dialects are treated as if they were one, just

³⁹ Adapted from A.H. Gardiner (1927:6). The classifications assigned to these dialects are recent and the actual speakers of the dialects did not know them by these names.

as little attention is paid to the petty dialectal differences that exist among the numerous dialects spoken by the various Kalenjiin sub-nationalities.

The development of Coptic was slowed down two centuries or so after the Arab invasion of Egypt. The forceful introduction of Arabic, as the national and official language of Egypt, took place as soon as the Arab rulers moved their colonial administrative headquarters from Arabia into Cairo. In reaction to this development, the Copts had moved their patriarchate nearer to the Arabs' new government seat in Cairo. According to the *Coptic Primer 1*, 1986, the Coptic pope, Gabriel II (1132–1146 AD), who is not remembered with great nostalgia among the Copts today, soon after the relocation of the patriarchate to the Arab rulers' new capital, decreed the reciting of the Lord's Prayer in Arabic. This he did reportedly in order to placate the Arabic-speaking government that was at this time weary of the Copts because other Christian forces from Europe were fighting Muslims up north for and in defence of Jerusalem. This was the time of the famed Crusades and Pope Gabriel may have found it wiser to adopt the conqueror's language and, in so doing, appear not to be too sympathetic to the cause of fellow Christians who were struggling (in vain) to contain Muslim onslaught on Palestine.

However, the Pope's order led to his flocks' gradual tendency to favour the use of the Arabic language for more of their liturgical texts. And the gradual translating of everything else Coptic into Arabic, in order to meet this desire, not only saw to the death of the Coptic language (*Coptic Primer 1* 1986:5–7), but also to the faster waning of Christianity itself in Egypt. This was to the immense benefit of Islam—which was probably sweeter sounding and more exact in the Arabic language than Christianity could ever hope to be in that original language of Islam.

Added to this natural attraction of the Arabic language to Islam was the tax benefit that the Arab government had allowed for all Muslims. The native Egyptians who wanted to keep their Christian faith paid tax for it while those that converted to Islam were exempted from the religion tax promptly upon conversion (Harris 1971:209).

Although the taxation-for-faith treatment that was meted out to the Egyptian native Christians by the Muslim Arabs may sound cruel, it would appear much kinder compared to the treatment that was meted out to the native Egyptians of the Isis faith by the then newly converted Christians many centuries earlier. While the Arab Muslim rulers in their heyday “merely” taxed those that refused to convert to Islam, the Roman Christian rulers beheaded those of the Isis faith that refused to convert to the then new official state religion—Christianity (Cf. Harris, 1971:397). But there was no shortage of those that had continued to perform—in brave defiance—the rites of Isis. During research, many modern Copts told the author—although perhaps half in jest—that the modern Copts of Egypt are the descendants of wealthy native Egyptians. Being wealthy at the time of tax exemption for Muslims and the corresponding punitive tax for the Copts, they were able to buy their religious freedom by paying taxes, rather than abandoning their faith. And, indeed, the Copts

of today are, on the average, visibly wealthier than their Muslim compatriots—thus, by this nature, lending credence to the popular theory of a wealthy past.

It is possible that there were those of the Isis faith that rather than pick one of the two choices available, i.e., to convert to Christianity and forfeit all the rituals of Isis, or ignore the government order and get beheaded, chose their own third alternative: they fled the country and trekked southwards with their Isis faith and the associated rituals intact, swelling proto-Kalenjiin numbers as well as those of others that had emigrated earlier.

The Coptic language was in the process of dying for 700 years, beginning from the first two centuries or so after the Arab invasion and was, for all practical purposes, dead by the fifteenth century AD. The proud Coptic priests and monks, however, kept the Pharaonic language alive, albeit largely within the confines of the churches as, for all practical purposes, a static holy language of liturgy, which is how it has survived to this day (Cf. *Coptic Primer* 1, 1986:7).

Pronunciation Help

Transcription from the Coptic script here has generally been done in the conventional manner, i.e. as practised by Coptic writers (e.g. Fr. Malaty). There are a few exceptions, however. The Coptic script has been transcribed into the Latin (Roman) alphabet assigning the vowels their absolute values as understood in East Africa.

The very common Kalenjiin (and Coptic) double /o/ is not read as /uu/ as is the rule where English words are concerned. There are many ways of pronouncing the Kalenjiin /o/ or double /o/ but it should do here to say that the Kalenjiin single /o/ is generally akin in its pronunciation to the /o/ of the British English “top,” and that double /o/ is a mere prolongation of this sound. If “foot” were a Kalenjiin word, for instance, it would have to be read like the English “fought.” The doubling of the vowels is, therefore, a quantitative and not a qualitative phenomenon.

Double /e/ as in *soteet*, “a gourd,” for instance, should not be pronounced like the /ea/ in ‘tea,’ but should be pronounced like the /e/ in ‘tell’—only prolonged. Again, there are several ways of pronouncing /e/, depending on the intended meaning, but the Roman script is inadequate for illustrating them.

Kalenjiin vowel /i/ should always be read as in the English word “till” and not as in the word “ice.” A doubling of /i/ is, roughly speaking, a mere lengthening of the sound as in “till.” There are many ways in which this vowel is pronounced be it double or single, depending on the intended meaning. The vowel /a/ is to be read as in the English word “tap” and any double /a/ appearing in a word constitutes a mere lengthening of the same sound.

Care needs to be taken when we come to the diphthongs, i.e., where two different vowels follow each other, such as /ai/, /ia/, /ei/, /oi/, /eu/, etc. The coming of the New Testament in the Markweeta dialect, *Ārāruut nyoo Rēēl*, has exposed an

interesting characteristic, perhaps unknown to many up until now, namely, that the Markweeta dialect, in contrast to the major dialects to the south, avoids diphthongs by assigning letter /r/ in the place of one of the vowels. The Pokoot, on their part, may substitute the same with /gh/. It appears ancient Egyptian, or one of its dialects, also treated certain diphthongs in the same manner as do the Markweeta dialect speakers where what is, say, /ai/ in central and southern Kalenjiin dialects, ancient Egyptian and northern Kalenjiin render it /ar/ and often /agh/ where the Pokoot are concerned; /ei/ becomes /er/ in Markweeta. A good example is in *pei*, “water,” which is rendered in northern Markweeta *per*; central and southern Kalenjiin *yai*, “do,” “make,” is rendered in both Markweeta and ancient Egyptian *yir*, or *ir*; *mach* or *mai*, “want,” “love” in central and southern Kalenjiin dialects, as in Coptic, is rendered in Markweeta and ancient Egyptian *mar* or *mer*. Central and southern Kalenjiin—also ancient Egyptian—*ei*, *euut*, “hand,” is rendered in Markweeta, *eeruu*. So, the “Creator” is translated *Iriin* in Markweeta where in central and southern Kalenjiin dialects, this is rendered *Yaiin*. It follows that the newly published New Testament in Markweeta is completely devoid of diphthongs, which are common and clear in the major dialects of Kalenjiin. As for Pokoot, the would-be diphthongs end up being pronounced and written /gh/, e.g., *poiisyo*, “work” in the central and southern dialects may be spelt and pronounced *poghiisyo* in Pokoot.

Any /ch/ combination has the sound of the same combination in the English word “church.”

Any /ngʹ/ combination is to be read like the /ng/ in the English word “sing.” If it is a plain /ng/ combination, i.e. without an apostrophe (’), it is to be read like the /ng/ in the English word “finger.”

A Note on Sound Change and Transcription

Most Coptic grammar books teach that accent on Coptic words is on the last but one syllable.⁴⁰ Gardiner has observed that this was also relevant to ancient Egyptian. He observes that the accented syllable was always either the last or the last but one (penultimate) syllable (Gardiner 1927:429). The Kalenjiin equivalent of accent, which is represented by a longer vowel sound, rests on exactly that penultimate point as a rule and only the occasional exception sees the stress resting on the antepenultimate point. Hollis noted this fact vis-a-vis the Nandi dialect during the first decade of the Twentieth century (1909:156) and two years later, Beech confirmed the same vis-a-vis the Pokoot dialect (1911:49).

The more ancient Egyptian script, the hieroglyphic writing, ignored vowels mostly.⁴¹ The ancient Egyptian readers themselves knew what vowel to assign and where to assign it by understanding the context. Some Semites, e.g. Hebrews, through the Phoenicians, adopted this style. But this consonant-controlled style of writing is only suitable for the Semitic languages such as Hebrew. It is unsuitable

⁴⁰ e.g. Plumley, Mattar.

⁴¹ This long-held position among Egyptologists, however, is open to further investigation.

for Hamitic and this situation has led to wrong or inadequate transcriptions of the hieroglyphs. A simple example that may be used for the illustration of this handicap is  *Kmt*. This, as we saw above, is an ancient Egyptian word, in the definite form, meaning “the country” (Gardiner 1927:611). The consonants, /kmt/, to a typical Hamitic family language like Kalenjiin, for example; could stand for any of: *kameet*, “his/her mother”; *koomet*, “your mother”; *kimyeet*, loaf-like stiff millet or maize porridge—the Kalenjiin staple food—from ancient Egyptian  *kmh*, “loaf” (F.Dict. 279). It could also stand for *kemeuut*, which may have originally either meant “the death of country”—“famine” or “drought”—or just “to die.” Other Kalenjiin possibilities around this consonantal frame, /kmt/, are: *kamut*, *kimut*, *komut*, *kumyaat*, etc.

However, drawing from the Kalenjiin *emeet*, “the country” or “the land,” and our knowledge of the Pharaonic rule of accent-on-penultimate syllable, we ideally ought to conclude that the consonantal frame *kmt* should correctly be transcribed as *kemeet*.⁴² We note that *kemeet* is *emeet* in the Kalenjiin languages. The ancient Egyptians had both *kemeet* and *emeet* (not *amait*, as transcribed by Budge—Hieroglyphic Dictionary p.6). The Kalenjiin language has retained only *emeet*, although the ancient form of the noun, *kemeet*, may possibly be discerned in *kemeuut*, “death of the land/country” as given above. *Kaam*, “mother” in Kalenjiin and *kameet*, “his/her/its mother” or *koomet*, “your mother,” may have been associated with the word for “country” in a Semitic radical consonantal frame manner. This would have arisen from the fact that “country” was also regarded as “mother,” i.e., “mother country.”

This potential for ambiguity is what led to the ancient Egyptians’ writing habit of resorting to the cumbersome drawing of small sketches of the intended object after the alphabetical presentation for almost every word. These sketches that come after alphabetical symbols are called determinants. An example of a determinant symbol is the sketch of a food bowl  (or ) at the end of the word for “loaf,” *kmh*, .

The major Kalenjiin dialects have lost some ancient Egyptian sounds that they definitely had before. Some of the smaller Kalenjiin communities, however, retain a few of these sounds that have been lost to others in their respective dialects. The central Kalenjiin no longer have the harsh breathy /h/ sound as in “husband,” for example.⁴³ Excepting, of course, the /h/ sound that is retained in songs and in their opening and closing signal *oleiyo-ho!* Included in this exception are those refrains that include *aa-haiya*, etc. and affirmative (also urging on, or even doubting) exclamations such as *eheel*!, *uhuum*!, etc. This sound is common in Coptic as it was in ancient Egyptian. All ancient Egyptian and Coptic words which begin with /h/,

⁴² Following a discussion with H.E. Professor Chesaina, Pretoria, October 2000.

that are retained in the major Kalenjiin dialects, now begin with the first vowel after the /h/. For example, (*hen*) meaning “in” (prep. as in “in the name of the Father”) is now merely *een* (or *eeng*) to most Kalenjiin.

As pointed out above, some of the smaller northern Kalenjiin sub-nationalities, e.g. the Marakwet group, still have that harsh breathy /h/ sound. *Him*, Marakwet for “sky,” is pronounced just like the English word “him” (*him* is also found in many Hebrew words that have something to do with the heavens or sky). The Marakwet also say *hu* for “come!” And, as we have seen above, the Pokoot are still the only Kalenjiin branch who still pronounce *hem*, “nationality,” as of ancient Egyptian times where, according to Reclus, the word “Ham” was in use.

If we take the central Kalenjiin area as the linguistic focal area of the entire Kalenjiin nation, we will expect, according to well-established linguistic knowledge, that the outskirts, or the fringe communities such as the Pokoot and Marakwet, would have retained here and there certain archaic linguistic forms called relic forms (Cf. Horowitz, GME 1999). And this happens to be the case as borne by the above examples.

The guttural /kh/ sound, which is represented by the hieroglyphic symbol  and the letter **h** in the Bohairic Coptic dialect, as in the word, **hen** (*khen*), meaning “in” (this being the Kalenjiin preposition *een*), does not exist in most modern Kalenjiin dialects any more. Instead where /kh/ was in the parallel ancient Egyptian word, Kalenjiin either ignores the throat sound and begins at the first vowel sound of the word or changes the /kh/ sound into a plain /k/ sound.

A good example of this is to be found in the ancient Egyptian *khe* which, placed before a verb, changes it to the infinitive. *Khe* is, therefore, the equivalent of the English word “to” in such infinitival context as in the examples “to cry,” “to fall.”

This *khe* or *kh* of ancient Egypt is rendered *kee* in Kalenjiin. An example: , which is transcribed *kh*, as in  *khpi*, “to walk” (Gardiner 1927:628) or “to go,” is rendered in Kalenjiin, *kee-pa*, “to walk,” or “to go.” The old /kh/ sound has been reduced in the latter tongue to mere /k/ sound.⁴⁴ Another example:  *khsr*, “to drive away,” “to dispel” (Gardiner 1927:584, 586), is retained in Kalenjiin as *kee-ser*, “to drive away” in such a manner that the victims flee in all directions, in a disorganised way; or “to scatter,” “to disperse.”

The Coptic and ancient Egyptian /sh/ sound, as in “shirt,” has also been lost to the major dialects of the Kalenjiin language for sure, and where such sound occurred in an ancient Egyptian word, Kalenjiin replaces it with /ch/ as in kitchen, or with just a plain /s/. Example: **ⲭⲉⲣⲉ** (*shere*), “blessed” or “hail,” survives in Kalenjiin as *sere*, meaning; “blessed,” “prosperous,” “plenty,” etc. However, the Keiyo dialect still

⁴⁴ Some Kalenjiin dialects, e.g. Terik, may use either *ke* or *che*, which still conforms to ancient Egyptian practice, considering that Egyptologists assign the symbol  either a /kh/ or a /ch/ value.

has at least one example—if a fading one—of the /sh/ sound, as is to be found in a popular common proper name among the Keiyo people: Cheelashaw.

The major Kalenjiin dialects have also lost the /d/ sound as in “do,” and where an ancient Egyptian word had this sound, the Kalenjiin-speakers have replaced it with a /t/ sound in the parallel.  *d-r-yt*, ancient Egyptian for “bird” or “kite” (F.Dict. 32) for example, is rendered *tariit* in modern Kalenjiin—which, however, is closer to Coptic **ⲧⲣⲏ** (*t[a]rii*).

However, the Barabaig Kalenjiin-speakers of Tanzania still have the /d/ as well as many other sounds that are now lost to the major dialects of Kalenjiin of Kenya. Barabaig *hangd*, “cloth,” exhibits the sound capabilities vis-a-vis /h/ and /d/, both of which are now lost to the major Kalenjiin dialects. In most Kalenjiin dialects *hangd* is *angeet*.

Coptic too seems to have lost the /d/ sound. The /d/ sound in Coptic now seems to appear only in words that are said to be of Greek origin.

The /d/ sound exists in the major Kenya Kalenjiin dialects only in combination with other consonants but which must precede it, e.g. *leeldeet*, a member of the “thorn tree” species; *keeldo*, “a leg,” *tuumdo*, any of the “birth” ceremonies such as naming of a baby, circumcision, wedding, etc. However, strictly speaking, this /d/ is, in fact, a mispronounced /t/. The /d/ is imposed by the preceding consonants. So *leeldeet* and *tuumdo* are *leel-teet* and *tuum-to* respectively. The consonantal /r/, /k/, /s/ and /p/ sounds, for some reason, are treated like a vowel and do not, therefore, influence the /t/ sound, e.g. as in: *aarteet*, “the goat,” *kerta*, “ration,” *ng'ookto*, “a dog,” *asta*, “dissipate” and *roopta*, “the rain,” etc.

The very common Kalenjiin /ny/ sound, as in the country name “Kenya,” and which is pronounced like the /gn/ combination in “cognac,” does not seem to have existed either in Coptic or in ancient Egyptian. This is hard to believe and it is tempting to attribute this omission to the work of the European Egyptologists who, themselves lacking that sound in their own individual mother tongues, have not been able to recognise it in the primary Egyptian sources. The impression, that ancient Egyptian had no /ny/ sound in its speech, will persist as long as we keep the habit of transcribing from hieroglyphics in the manner in which the Egyptologists have always done.

However, the wavy symbol/character , which is read /n/ and which represented water, may have also stood for the sound /ny/—as understood in East Africa—to the ancient Egyptian. The Kalenjiin call a lake, or a large, still body of water, *nyaanja*. This is a common word in many other parts of East and Central Africa and is shared by Bantu and non-Bantu languages. The wavy symbol then may have originally represented the sound /ny/ as in *nyaanja*.

 *mn*, “dwell” or be “established” in a place, provides another illustration to this argument.  *mn* corresponds in meaning to the Kalenjiin *meny*, and *meny*, in all probability, has to be the fuller transcription of the hieroglyphic presentation.

For a Coptic example, we have: **ⲛⲟⲩⲓ** (*nui*) “draw near,” which corresponds to Kalenjiin *nyoo(n)*, “come (here).” There are many such parallels and the early Copts may have, in fact, used /**ⲛ**/ to represent both the /n/ sound and the /ny/ sound. The reader was then left to determine, from context, which of the two sounds to apply to a particular word that contained that letter.

Summary of Part I: Cultural Background

We have seen that the Kalenjiin people’s oral tradition to the effect that their ancestors originated in *Misiri* (Egypt), has not only been consistent but persistent all along to the extent that the same was recorded by the pioneering colonial officers and anthropologists immediately upon the latter’s arrival in East Africa. Notable among those who published their reports were Sir Charles Eliot, the governor of the territory that was later to be renamed Kenya, and Sir Claud Hollis, Eliot’s man in charge of native affairs who was himself an anthropologist of consequence. Both men believed, from observation and from listening to what they called “distinct tradition to this effect” and were subsequently able to state categorically that the Kalenjiin and kin came “beyond doubt from the north” and that the “neighbourhood of Egypt and Abyssinia (Ethiopia)” rendered “several hypotheses plausible.” The joint and separate submissions of those gentlemen are important because, among other reasons, far from being well disposed towards the Kalenjiin, their concession was actually in spite of themselves.

It is also very instructive the fact that the Kalenjiin-speaking people that those pioneering colonial officers interviewed orally through interpreters, were very unsophisticated folk who could neither read nor write and knew little outside their socio-cultural and territorial confines. The fact that they were able to communicate the key aspects of their heritage, including the important tradition of ancient Egyptian origin, to the first white men that they ever met in their lives, is remarkable in itself. It is an attestation as to the common-knowledge manner and depth of conviction that this aspect of oral tradition was held in and kept through generations. This tradition is not, therefore, a latter-day creation of the educated Africans who are seeking to bask in the glory of ancient Egypt because of the perceived want of greater history with regard to their communities, or for any other reason for that matter. Neither is it part of what oral historians call feedback, namely that a people learn something from early visitors and incorporate it so successfully into their own lore that it would soon be forgotten that the idea was borrowed (Cf. Henige, 1982:82–83). Here, for all practical purposes, Eliot and Hollis were among the earliest visitors and, as such, they could not themselves have been fed on feedback.

Of importance too, as an element of proof of the origin tradition, are the settlements of the kin of the Kalenjiin that are scattered lineally in an approximate north-south axis along the very route that the Kalenjiin elders claim to have been followed by their ancestors. These settlements testify to a slow migration that actually amounted to a gradual southern expansion rather than a translocational trek of the Boer kind. It is worth noting that the route, which is now described by the remnant settlements of the kin of the Kalenjiin, is similar to one of those that were described by Seligman in his controversial theory of one-way north-to-south civilising influence of the Hamites. Proof of that route was further extended from the Southern Ethiopian highlands up to Mt. Elgon by the American adventurer, Rear Admiral Dodge, who personally walked that route in order to relive the experience, collect and corroborate evidence.

Seligman's one-way north-to-south civilising theory has little going for it by way of either physical or oral evidence but the corroborative value of his route theory is worth noting. All the same, if socio-cultural influence, such as is characterised by the introduction of circumcision, should be considered an element of civilisation, then Seligman has support in the works of, among others, Professor Muriuki and Dirk Berg-Schlosser, who have respectively collected oral evidence of such influence upon the people of Mt. Kenya area by the Hamitic speakers of the proto-Kalenjiin kind.

However, that the influence was not always one-way, namely, that the Africans to the south also helped civilise and populate Egypt has been argued by Frankfort as we saw above. In one instance, he says,

“The basic proof that features of an ancient African civilisation survive today and that, consequently, resemblances between modern Africans and ancient Egyptians are not always emanations from Egypt, is supplied by certain Maasai arm rings. These are identical with two found in a grave of between 3000 and 2700 BC which almost certainly contained not an Egyptian but a foreigner from Punt or Somaliland.”

Other cultural evidence cited elsewhere by Frankfort include the Pokoot wrist knife (and many more shared items—1948:348). Such cultural evidence first of all proves that two-way migration existed and, secondly, that the route, as described by Seligman can be thus ascertained. In an indirect but definite acknowledgement of this, the early western anthropologists proposed several classificatory names for the Kalenjiin and kin, and all the alternative names, including those that were invented later by African scholars themselves have, instructively, retained a common strain: “Nilo-.”

So if the migratory route makes sense, why would the oral tradition that holds Tto as the ultimate cradle-land not make sense similarly? We are able to locate the legendary Tto and it conveniently rests in the general area that was inhabited by the Sebben military clan of Pharaoh. Sebben, in its various renderings, is a name that has been acknowledged by Kalenjiin elders as being the original collective name of the proto-Kalenjiin up to the Mt. Elgon concentration area. We are also able to

determine the Kalenjiin ring to the names of the kings from the Egyptian Sebben, or the general Delta area, which, however, is not to say much, given that the kings from other locations to the south had names with similar sounding ring. The latter group of names though was disadvantaged in that the Greek writers, who were a much later phenomenon, did not write the names in their fully vocalised script as they did for the names of the relatively more recent Pharaohs of the 26th Dynasty who reigned from Sais (Delta) area. As we saw, the Saitic Pharaohs had invited a sizeable population of Greeks to settle in Naucratis, near Sais.

Another important piece of evidence to the effect that the proto-Kalenjiin lived in this area before is the appreciable number of apparent Greek loan words in today's Kalenjiin language. The equally appreciable number of apparent Hebrew loan words evident in Kalenjiin constitutes another testimony to the same effect. Any opposing view needs, therefore, to explain away the presence of the words in Kalenjiin that are derived from two unrelated non-African languages.

The possibility exists though that the same words could owe origin to ancient Egyptian itself, meaning that even as they exist in Greek and Hebrew, they are ancient Egyptian loan words. Nevertheless, given such a scenario, the origin claim of the Kalenjiin elders would still stand proven thereby, namely that the Kalenjiin language inherited the same multiply-shared stock from ancient Egyptian just as the two non-African languages, Greek and Hebrew⁴⁵, were able to borrow therefrom.

We have noted Eisee Reclus' view to the effect that the name "Hamite" might, after all, originate from the ancient Egyptians' own name for their nation, and we have corroborated the same view here from the viewpoint of the Kalenjiin language. This, added to the "black land" essence of the word for "country" *Kemet*, spiced with Herodotus' eyewitness account to the effect that the Egyptians of his time were black, and corroborated by Batrawi and others' archaeological confirmations to the same effect, we should have no cause to feel at all encumbered by the unnecessarily confusing and sensitive issue of race. In any case, we see that even Seligman, one of the chief architects of the racial model vis-a-vis the Hamites, concedes that the ethnic communities that were touched by Hamitic blood were, contrary to his expectation, darker than the rest of the neighbouring African ethnic groups that he was observing in Sudan during the early thirties!

We have noted that when all was said and done, the ancient Egyptians considered Africa to the south of them to be their cradle-land. This is the location that they reportedly called the "Land of our Gods." One of the great Egyptologists, Faulkner, concedes the same by way of a dictionary entry (F.Dict. 293) and it is corroborated by non-other authority than the Bible (Ez. 29:13-14).

The physical attributes of the ancient Egyptians as described by Breasted, who likens them to Puntites, or the Somali, and declares that they were a fusion of Libyans and East Africans; Frankfort's allusion to their "black African

⁴⁵ Hebrew is considered "non-African" here only in deference to the modern general understanding and is not meant to preclude the possibility that all Semitic languages are indeed of African origin in the first place.

background”; Herodotus’ definitive eyewitness accounts, dating back to the 5th century BC, to the effect that those people were black, among others’ works, help complete a picture of the ancient Egyptians that is similar to those of the monuments, tomb wall paintings, papyrus paintings, etc. that were left behind by them.

The modern Egyptians generally deny the black African genes in their blood against clear evidence to the contrary and awareness of this sensibility is important for researchers who will want to carry out fieldwork there. Suffice it here only to belabour the stance to the effect that, from observing that population, it is possible to infer the historical black parental stock with little room for ambiguity.

Some aspects of the ancient Egyptians’ material culture, such as the keeping of the ceremonial *kamar* bullock, which is still current in some parts of Kalenjiinland; the wearing of skin garments which was characteristic of the earlier dynastic periods, as well as the use of the ceremonial leopard skin, confirm an ancient cultural unity that is corroborated by the physical profile mentioned above. The Nilotic propensity to nudity has been reported with regard to Egyptians of certain dynastic periods. Early colonial officers and anthropologists noted the same with regard to the East African Nilotes.

The linguistic linkage will be addressed more fully in the subsequent sections but suffice here to say that Frankfort (1948:348) refers to the modern East African peoples “who show affinities to the ancient Egyptians in language or in physique or both.”

By resorting to credible historical sources, we have ascertained, or re-emphasised, a known fact but which is not so obvious to laymen: that the Arabisation and Islamisation of Egypt is a relatively recent phenomenon. Therefore, we need not find it shocking, or inharmonious, that the Kalenjiin ancestors should have insisted on tracing origin to what turns out to be an Arab land when their descendants do not appear to exhibit any evidence of even a single drop of Arab blood. Neither should we find their ignorance of Islam, or Coptic Christianity for that matter, an inconsistency. To the contrary, we shall come to appreciate by and by that their ignorance of Islam and Christianity on the one hand, and their adherence to an older Egyptian religion on the other, augment credibility to their traditional claim rather than detract from it.

Although this work dwells much on the Kalenjiin people’s connection to ancient Egypt, sight may not be lost of the fact that, ultimately, all races of the world—so we hear—originated from an area probably corresponding to East and Central Africa.

Introduction to Part II

This Part discusses comparative linguistics as a universal *tool* for probing genetic relationships between languages. A researcher employs this method upon noticing preliminary evidence of similarities that in initial quantity and quality can justify a hypothesis. *Comparative* linguistics differs from *contrastive* linguistics in that the latter concentrates on dissimilarities and pays no attention to either typological or genetic relationship. We will discuss and contrast both in order to make clearer the important difference between the two methods as far as our theme is concerned.

We will explore the lexicostatistical technique of comparing the basic words of language. We will also see why linguists value the basic word order that may characterise languages that are typologically similar, and especially those that seem to exhibit this characteristic from a genetic rather than typological point of view. We will explore other applicable comparative techniques, tools and areas that are grammar based, such as: infixation, morphemic inflexion, noun formation, etc.

CHAPTER 5

Comparative vs. the Contrastive Method

“The subject of comparative linguistics, or comparative philology, as it is called more traditionally, can be broadly defined as the study of genetic relationships between languages,” (Katičić, 1970:1). A researcher who chooses to employ this technique often begins from an a priori position that the languages whose relationship is to be investigated have a genetic relationship, the extent of which affinity it is his or her undertaking to ascertain using the available scientific techniques. The supposition for comparative studies is that “only adequate preliminary evidence should exist before commencing with a hypothesis,” (Vermaak, 1995a:20).

Unlike comparative linguistics, “contrastive linguistics describes differences between languages (related or not)” (Bennett, 1998:3). According to this definition, therefore, the researcher who chooses to apply a contrastive research method for the investigation of relationships of the targeted languages is often one who holds an a priori position that the languages whose relationship is to be scientifically investigated have little or no genetic affinity. A further definition specifies that contrastive linguistics notes and describes similarities and differences in languages rather than grouping them genetically or typologically. Krzeszowski (1990:10), summarises these categorisations as follows:

“Typological linguistics focuses on clusters of languages united by some common feature or features, while contrastive linguistics focuses on pairs of languages and explores similarities as well as differences between them... contrastive linguistics is an area of linguistics in which a linguistic theory is applied to a comparative description of two or more languages, which need not be genetically or typologically related.”

Viewed graphically, both types of researchers—the comparative oriented researcher and the contrastive oriented researcher—would find it worthwhile to concentrate their energies on a pair of languages whose relationship, by intuition, would appear to conform to scenario B and C respectively as represented in the language relationship cline diagram in Figure 2. The relationship between the pairs of languages (L_3/L_4 and L_5/L_6) of the respective scenarios B and C, is such that they have certain features in common—the pair under scenario C having more features in common than the pair under scenario B.

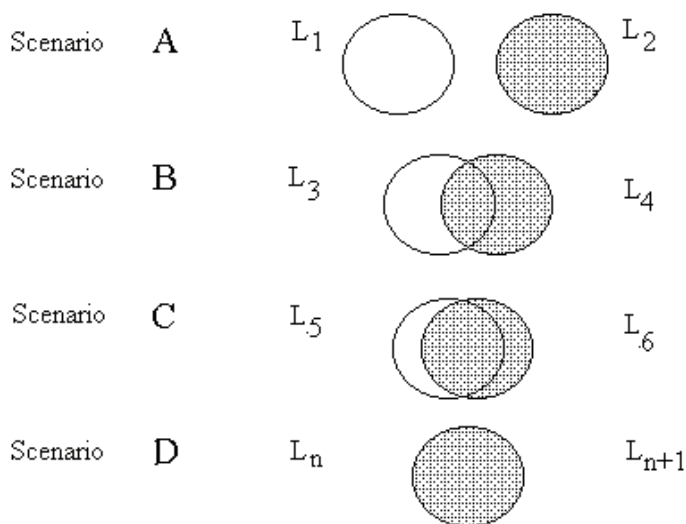


Figure 2: Hypothetical pairs of languages in a cline ranging from those with nothing in common to those that are identical (a modification based on Krzeszowski, 1990:5)

The relationship, or the lack of it, between L_1 and L_2 under scenario A is such that they appear to intuition at the outset to have no feature in common and, therefore, no one would bother attempting to study the relationship either from a comparative or from a contrastive viewpoint. Both comparative and contrastive ventures assume that there is at least one feature in common, a *tertium comparationis* upon which comparative or contrastive arguments could be based. “The two languages that would have nothing in common could not be compared since there would be nothing that could serve as *tertium comparationis*” (Krzeszowski, 1990:4).

At the other extreme of the cline, the hypothetical languages L_n and L_{n+1} under scenario D, readily appear to intuition to be structurally identical and “the two structurally identical languages, being identical, could not be compared either since there would be nothing different to consider” (Krzeszowski, 1990:4). Going by the above two arguments, therefore, one may infer that comparative and contrastive linguistic ventures rely on both the presence and the absence of a measure of parallelism in the features of the languages whose relationships are being investigated. The lack of one or the other necessarily cripples the study attempt.

Put differently, if the congruity between the target language pair, as in scenario D, is absolute, then we are talking about one and the same language bearing two different names, and one did not get anywhere comparing and contrasting two identical objects even if they went by different names. Conversely, if the structural incongruity between the pair of languages being considered is as complete as that between a man and a tree (an idea represented by scenario A), then any comparative or contrastive effort would yield little if anything worth the time and effort spent on the exercise. Generally speaking, there are no features, *tertium comparationis*, shared between a man and a tree to enable a sensible comparison to be made between

them. Krzeszowski (1990:4) espouses the essentiality of the presence of certain similarities in the target languages in order to make tenable comparative work to be carried out between them as follows:

“What makes a purely structural approach to contrastive studies theoretically impossible is the fact that any comparison presupposes similarity as *tertium comparationis* (TC) against which differences can be stated. Therefore languages are structurally comparable in the extent to which they are structurally similar.”

We gather from Krzeszowski's statement that all comparisons involve the basic assumption that the objects to be compared have something in common against which differences can be stated. This common platform of reference is the *tertium comparationis*, and this could be applied to comparative work with regard to any discipline (Cf. Krzeszowski, 1990:15), indeed as one is able to do with respect to comparative religion, for an example. Different objects can be compared and may be found to exhibit similarities in certain respects while they are dissimilar in others. The example is given of the square and rectangle: in terms of the angles they are similar while with regard to the lengths of their respective sides they exhibit a difference (Cf. Krzeszowski, 1990:20).

Some grammarians seek to establish the differences or similarities in words and word order in various languages. Thus, specialists in comparative grammar study sound and meaning correspondences among languages to their relationship to one another. By looking at similar forms in related languages, grammarians can discover how different languages may have influenced one another (Cf. MEE 98/8).

By launching into the Egypto-Kalenjiin comparative linguistic exercise that is the mainstay of this book, the author, by implication, actually believes a priori that the nature of relationship between the extinct Egyptian language and the living Kalenjiin language, belongs somewhere between scenarios B and C of Figure 2 above. That is to say, there are enough incidences of semblance between them as well as enough incidences of difference between them to warrant either a comparative or a contrastive engagement. The author's choice is the comparative method given that he seeks to prove and to establish a long-hidden fact of historical and genetic affinity and is neither to disclaim nor to downplay one. The contrastive method seeks to explain similarities and differences in language forms, especially the latter, in order to enhance a language learner's progress. The technique highlights the structural differences between the learner's language and the desired language with the express intention of making the foreign forms easier to memorise. Other uses into which contrastive linguistics may be put, other than as a language lesson-plan tool, is discovering language universals, and studying problems in translation, studying language types, etc. (Cf. Verma and Krishnaswamy, 1989:349). Given its practical, or applied, nature, this method suits researchers who are carrying out an interlingual analysis of contemporary languages.

But since in our case here, the languages, or language stages, to be compared are not contemporaries as at present, in that one is long dead while the other one is still alive and dynamic, the exercise firmly belongs in comparative linguistics and particularly in diachronic linguistics. Diachronic linguistics, also called historical linguistics, deals with the study of the similarities and dissimilarities of language systems at different periods of history. It is possible to study one language in its two or more stages through history, noting the changes and the retained similarities. The two or more language stages through history may bear different names and may even be based in disparate geographical locations but a properly controlled study can establish their historical unity beyond doubt as a genetic one, if that is the case. This exercise belongs, by design and purpose, therefore, in the category described by Katičić (1970:1) as follows:

“The Comparative method as the main tool of comparative linguistics serves to find out the data that are thought relevant for the establishment of genetic relationships. The results obtained by such research permit the classification of the languages of the world in accordance with genetic criteria.”

Genetic Classification: A Comparative Linguistics Exercise

There are several approaches to linguistic comparisons. Historical linguistics and the related field of comparative historical studies, as we have pointed out, aim at finding the common genetic background for all groups of languages. Typological linguistics refers to the field of comparative linguistics where languages are grouped together on the basis of the features that they share. Languages grouped together in the same typological group need not be genetically (historically) related. An example is given of English and Chinese, which are not genetically related but they share a number of grammatical properties, such as relatively fixed and grammatically constrained word order, paucity of inflections, and prominence of function words. These shared features place the two languages quite close in a typological grouping, in spite of the genetic distance separating them (Cf. Krzeszowski, 1990:9).

To establish relationships among languages is to study their genealogy and classify them genetically. Unlike a typological classification, a genetic classification involves comparing the sound and meaning units of different languages in order to show common parentage. Like family resemblances among people, shared genetic resemblances among related languages do not depend on where the languages are spoken or when they existed. But members of a language family have a historical connection with one another and descend in common from a single ancestor. Language family trees show the relationships among languages; the oldest traceable ancestor language is shown at the top of the tree, and the bottom branches show the distance of relationship among current living members of the family from the parent language and from one another.

Related languages are alike in that their grammatical elements and vocabulary show regular correspondences in both sound and meaning. For example, the English word

fish corresponds to Latin *piscis*, and English *father* to Latin *pater*. Where English has /f/, Latin has /p/; English /th/ corresponds to Latin /t/, and so forth. These English and Latin words are obvious cognates, judging from the consistency in the adoption of the parallel elements /p/ and /f/, /t/ and /th/.

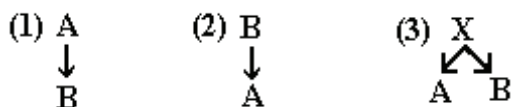
Comparative linguistics is the field in which sound and meaning correspondences among languages are analysed; genetic groups of languages are established; and by comparing modern languages, the hypothetical ancestor languages of such groups are tentatively reconstructed. Such reconstructed precursor languages are indicated by the term *proto-*, as in Proto-Indo-European (Cf. MEE 98/9).

Linguists assume that patterned similarities between languages are not accidental. They assume three possible explanations, once chance is ruled out:

1. mutual influence,
2. parallel development from a similar base, or
3. from a common ancestor.

It is not always easy to differentiate between the three; in some cases the experts need to look to all three to explain the similarities between any pair of languages (Bennett, 1998:25). Katičić puts numbers (2) and (3) above in a different way and demonstrates with a diagram as follows:

“The genetic relationship of languages is usually defined by sound laws: two phonemic strings are genetically related if one can be derived by sound laws from the other or both from a postulated third phonemic string. These three possibilities determine the three ways in which languages A and B can be genetically related. All genetic relationship, however complicated they may be, can be reduced to combinations of these three basic patterns of genetic relationship” (Katičić, 1970:7).



Diachronic and Synchronic Linguistics

Having picked the choice of comparative linguistics for this study, one is then faced with two or three possible study approaches within the field of comparative linguistics: either to pursue the diachronic or the synchronic analytical methods or both. As we have already said, when a language is studied as an object of development and change through time, the study is called diachronic, or historical linguistics. *Diachronic linguistics* is the study of a single language, tracing its development through time, looking at the similarities and differences in several languages at the same time, or combining the two, studying the development of a language family from its common ancestor to the language of today. *Synchronic linguistics*, on the other hand, examines one, two, or more linguistic systems as they

existed, or as they do exist, over a contemporaneous period (Cf. Bennett, 1998:3, Verma and Krishnaswamy, 1989:348–349).

Synchronic linguistics is the newer of the two approaches having gained recognition and wider acceptance only early in the 20th century. During the last years of the 19th century, linguists began turning their attention to non-historical aspects of language organisation and function. They developed ways of studying a language independently of its own past history, as an object functioning at any given time or stage of its existence. The Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure's detailed exposition of the non-historical approach in the posthumous publication, in 1916, of his *Course in General Linguistics*, ushered in the new discipline in linguistics. The new vantage on language came to be known as synchronic linguistics, in contradistinction to historical or diachronic linguistics (Cf. Malone, GME 1993).

Put differently, when a language is studied irrespective of its own past—as an object having specific properties at any given temporal point of its existence—the study belongs in the sphere of descriptive or synchronic linguistics.

The recognition of the above two analytic perspectives, which provide complementary rather than competing modes of linguistic investigation, has remained a cardinal feature of linguistics (Cf. Malone, GME 1993). However, as we have emphasised, our project here belongs in the older diachronic, or historical, linguistics fold.

Identifying and Declaring Items for a Comparative Exercise

A classical contrastive and comparative analysis consists of three steps that are not always clearly distinguishable in the analysis itself but are tacitly assumed:

1. description;
2. juxtaposition;
3. comparison, i.e., contrastive analysis in the strict sense (Cf. Krzeszowski, 1990:35).

No comparison is possible without a prior description of the elements to be compared: all contrastive studies must, therefore, be founded on independent descriptions of the relevant items of the languages that are to be compared. The fundamental demand on such descriptions is that they should be made within the same theoretical framework so that items that are compared are seen to have an innate similarity, a common platform (Cf. Krzeszowski, 1990:35).

Juxtaposition is crucial in deciding what is to be compared with what and requires a bilingual person to identify the equivalents—therefore bilingual competence is essential. But, even though, there must be a sharing of semanto-syntactic *tertium comparationis* for a comparison to be possible.

The comparison requisite consists of three basic areas, a certain measure of lexical cognateness being subsumed, otherwise the attempt would be impractical:

1. Comparisons of various equivalent systems across languages, such as pronouns, articles, verbs, and in phonology: consonants, vowels, as well as subsystems, such as nasals, laterals, etc., depending on the degree of “delicacy” of the grammar.
2. Comparisons of equivalent constructions, for example, the interrogative, relative, negative, nominal phrase, etc., and in phonology: clusters, syllables, diphthongs, and various distributions of sounds.
3. Comparisons of equivalent rules—in those models where the concept of rule appears—for example, subject raising from embedded sentence, adjective placement, interrogative inversion, passivisation, etc., and in phonology: assimilation, dissimilation, metathesis, etc. (Cf. Krzeszowski, 1990:37).

In cross-language comparisons, the relative character of identity must be remembered: compared items can only be identical with respect to some selected property or properties that they share. There are three possibilities out of any comparison of given properties: identical in some respects and/or different in some respects, or there may be no equivalence at all: If X represents an item being compared in both languages and L_i represents one language and L_j the other, the three possibilities can be presented as follows: 1) $XL_i = XL_j$, 2) $XL_i \neq XL_j$, 3) $XL_i = \odot L_j$. Possibility No. 1 represents a case where item X in L_i is in some respects identical with an equivalent in L_j ; possibility No. 2 represents the situation arising when item X in L_i may be different in some respects from an equivalent item in L_j ; while possibility No. 3 represents the situation arising when item X in L_i has no equivalent in L_j (Krzeszowski, 1990:38).

We compare in order to see what is similar and what is different in the compared materials; we can only compare items which are in some respects similar, but we cannot use similarity as an independent criterion in deciding how to match items for comparison since, strictly speaking, similarity or difference is to result from the comparison and not to motivate it (Cf. MEE 98/8).

That may be so, but as we prepare to conduct a comparative linguistics research exercise, our mind must be preoccupied with an a priori position that is based on sound intuition; that the set of languages, whose respective corresponding features we intend to compare, exhibit some constant similarity and cognateness, otherwise there would be no incentive to spur the tedious research work involved. In fact it is the first few hints of cognateness that spur further comparative work. The strictness as to the set of corresponding items to compare controls the exercise from there. The very act of getting involved in judging the cognateness of items, as we have said, already assumes, on the basis of intuition, that they sort of have a common origin. Bennett observes that in practice, definitions of cognateness are greatly varied, that some studies demand very high standards, recognising as cognate only

semantically equivalent items that show point-by-point regular correspondence in form and then only where borrowing is ruled out:

“In most cases, a moderate, somewhat flexible standard of cognacy is desirable. We generally restrict cognacy to items whose similarity in form and meaning is too great to be due to chance and where borrowing and onomatopoeia can be ruled out... regularity of correspondence, which is quantifiable, is an important factor” (Bennett, 1998:27).

Bennet (1998:28) suggests that the number of instances that may justify terming a correspondence “regular” is arbitrary but that a number between three and five can be set as a minimum.

Brief Notes on the Comparative Linguistics Techniques Applied in this Study

Basic Words: Employing a Lexicostatistical Technique

Lexicostatistics involves judging degrees of linguistic relationship on the basis of the frequency of certain shared features. For the purpose of either simple counting or weighting, the researcher may elect to use any shared features within the areas of: vocabulary, inflectional morphemes, syntactic patterns and even cultural features. However,

“The most commonly used type of data is lexical, because the number of data is critical... (and) counts of linguistic features other than lexicon are rare because there simply are not enough phonemes or verbal constructions... In counting vocabulary, it is normal to use lists of between 100 and 500 items per language,” (Bennett, 1998:34).

A simple count of cognates from a basic word list gives the percentage of genetic relationship of the pair of languages whose historical relationship is being investigated. If, for example, out of 100 basic word list, language A and language B share 60 of the words, allowing for (or ignoring) skewing within reasonable levels of deviation on the individual words, then this result reflects a 60% degree of genetic relationship. Some linguists use the 60% retention, or the converse 40% loss, to calculate the length of time that has come to pass since the two languages were one and the respective speakers were one. A pair of languages that exhibit a 30% sharing of basic words, for example, would have drifted apart for a longer period than a pair that exhibits a 60% sharing of the same list (Cf. Bennett, 1998:35–37).

The weighting method awards a full point for a regular correspondence and penalises for skewing by awarding a smaller proportion of a point. No point is given when the items compared are not seen as related. The weighting method of count will award one point for regular correspondence, $\frac{2}{3}$ point for simple skewing and $\frac{1}{3}$ point for multiple skewing (Bennett, 1998:35–36). The aggregate

can be worked out in percentage terms when each individual item will have been considered. Because of the penalising for simple and multiple skewing, this method yields less generous results in terms of genetic relationships than does the simple count method.

Skewing reflexes of the protoform of a language or languages come as a result of random changes in one language or both (Cf. Guthrie, 1967:71). "Skewing may be formal, involving replacements of phonological units, metatheses, expansions or truncations" (Bennett, 1998:31).

Opinions of linguists differ on which items should be included in a lexicostatistical wordlist. Katičić admits that the list of basic word items for use in cognate counting is arrived at intuitively and therefore no two people will come up with the same list. However, Katičić (1970:128), is in accord with the fact that not all strata of the vocabulary are equally open to the intrusion of borrowings. Notable area wherein borrowing of basic vocabulary item is not uncommon is

"those semantic classes of vocabulary composed by lexemes denoting objects imported from foreign countries... We know intuitively very well this to be so, but it is not easy to find a methodologically sound criterion by which the borrowed and the inherited elements may be identified."

Bennett (1998:34), recommends the use of culture-free vocabulary, e.g. body parts rather than iron-working terminology, numerals rather than colour items, contending that cultural vocabulary is readily borrowed. However, in the experience of the author, colour, especially black, white and red, may be included in the statistical count of basic word list because they are emphatically basic and create an impression early on in a child's life. In fact, these colours are included in Bennett's list from Morris Swadesh's 200 basic wordlist (Cf. Bennett, 1998:40).

Where the 200 wordlist from Swadesh is concerned, conceivably, it may be difficult to obtain all the listed words from dead languages. Bennett (1998:41), recognises this problem and commendably provides for this kind of situation,

"However, it is often more convenient—especially when dealing with extinct languages for which many items on the Swadesh lists are not attested—to devise a list specific to the study... it is desirable to include vocabulary from a variety of semantic domains, not focusing on body parts or verbs of motion, for example. It is important to include both nouns and verbs—but do not draw the list with an eye to emphasising similarity or dissimilarity."

In the author's experience, with reference to Professor Christopher Ehret's list of 90 basic-word list which Ehret used for cognate counting between various East African languages and dialects, it is possible and more desirable to work with a 90–100 word list. One can eliminate many basic words from a longer list such as Swadesh's according to the degree of "basicness"—the most basic being preferred over the less basic. Words of a less basic nature like "liver," "leaf," "swim" and "year" may be excluded from a shorter list of 90–100 basic words.

The 90–100 basic word list is compiled in a neutral language such as English. From there, the researcher proceeds to look up the equivalents of the English words in a dictionary of the most shrunken of the languages being compared. Between Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian, for instance, Kalenjiin appears the more shrunken, i.e. it has less vocabulary. The researcher would then look up the words in what may be called a Kalenjiin dictionary, glossary, or recall from memory and proceed to look the same up in an ancient Egyptian dictionary. Chances are, the less-shrunken language—in this example, ancient Egyptian—will have several words for one item. In such a case, it is reasonable to take the one that compares to the word from the shrunken language. The logic employed here is that the shrunken language may have over the years either lost the other equivalents, retaining only one or two per item, or the shrunken language was a dialect of the less-shrunken language at the time of separating and were, therefore, identical in most basic respects but had their own dialectal idiosyncrasies. For example, there is only one general word for “intestines” (stomach entrails), “stomach,” “bowels,” and “belly” in Kalenjiin: *moeet*. But ancient Egyptian—considered as one together with Coptic for the purpose of this argument—has many words for the same item, general and specific but only one* of which comes to very close phonetic unity with the Kalenjiin equivalent *moeet*: (1)  (*noeish*) (2)  (*maht*)* or  (*makht*),  (*makhat*) (3)  (*nenshem*) (4)  (*qen-ti*) (5)  (*qeb-t*).⁴⁶

On account of the Coptic  (*maht*) or  (*makht*), supported by the close ancient Egyptian  (*makhat*), it is possible to confirm that the basic word “belly,” which is in Swadesh’s 200- basic vocabulary word list, is shared between ancient Egyptian and Kalenjiin. Particularly if there are many other cognates between the two languages from the same semantic domain of body part names, such as: head, hair, nose, leg, etc., there would be little cause to prompt one to consider the incidence of cognateness with respect to “belly” to be a mere coincidence. The virtue of considering lexical items in categories of semantic domains is what Bennet (1998:34) implies when he suggests as follows: “It is desirable to include vocabulary from a variety of semantic domains.”

Linguists generally agree that verbs are harder to drop and, conversely, harder to borrow. Bennett (1998:35) and Katičić (1970:129), who go on to examine the differential in the susceptibility to borrowing within the syntactic and substantive areas—concur. Katičić writes:

“So it can be stated that verbs are less open to borrowed morphs than substantives are, and among the morphemes of both (nouns and verbs) big classes there are quite clearly observable differences. Pronouns and numerals

⁴⁶ The Coptic and ancient Egyptian words are taken from E. Wallis Budge’s *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary* (p. 286a, 378a, 767b, 773a). It is the author’s considered opinion that the transcriptions by western Egyptologists, Budge included, have yet to be improved upon—which they admit—but the transcriptions used above, all the same, are Budge’s and they conform to the western convention. According to the author, that convention awaits a far-reaching African intervention.

are still seldomer borrowed. The class which is least of all exposed to borrowing is composed by the grammatical morphemes. The morphs which serve as their expression are mostly homogenous as to their origin. This holds true even in extreme cases of 'language mixture.'"

Word Order

Even though any two languages may form words or organise sentence elements in the same way, they may not necessarily be genetically related to each other. For example, English, which is from the Indo-European linguistic stock, just happens to share the SVO verbal word order with Kiswahili, a language from the Bantu African linguistic grouping, but they have little else in common and could not, therefore, be genetically related.⁴⁷ But, in many cases, two languages that have a similar basic word order have other features in common and the word order sharing in such cases, therefore, only goes to support the genetic relationship that the other features that the languages have in common would be suggesting.

In the Language Universals Project at Stanford University, for example, the American linguist Joseph Greenberg and his colleagues have shown that languages that share a basic word order (such as subject+verb+object or object+verb+subject or object+subject+verb) also share other features of structure (Cf. MEE 98/10).

Languages are often classified into basic word-order types because word order often correlates with other grammatical characteristics. For example, according to Greenberg, languages with the basic order subject+verb+object (as in English) also tend to have the orders adjective-noun and preposition-noun. On the other hand, languages having the basic order subject+object+verb tend to place the modifiers after nouns, for example, noun-adjective and noun-postposition (Cf. MEE 98/11).⁴⁸

Morphemes and Noun Formation

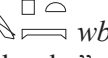
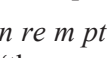
Perhaps the best definition of a morpheme is as the smallest contrastive unit in the grammar of a language; that is, the smallest element that can express grammatical contrasts. Morphemes may be described as "free" or "bound." A free morpheme is one that normally occurs as a separate indivisible word, such as "bank," "no," "house," and so on, whereas a bound morpheme can only occur as part of another word, such as the affixes non- and -ic in non-alcohol-ic, for example. Free morphemes may also form part of compound words such as car+port (carport) best-known, river+bank, etc. (Cf. MEE 98/12).

⁴⁷ For example the verbal sentence "father has come home (SVO)" is rendered in Kiswahili *baba ame-kuja nyumbani* Subject+Verb+Object (SVO). In Kalenjin the same is rendered: *kaago-nyo kaa paapa*—"has come home father"—Verb+Object+Subject (VOS). Or, alternatively, *kaago-nyo paapa kaa*, "has come father home": VSO.

⁴⁸ Part of this, of course, does not hold true between Kiswahili and English although they are both SVO languages. Kiswahili *mti mrefu* "a tall tree" reads "tree tall" which is noun + adjective and not adjective + noun of the English tradition. Here Kiswahili behaves like one of Greenberg's SOV languages with noun+modifier characteristic whereas it is a firm SVO language. Greenberg's generalisation, therefore, may have to be largely confined to the Native American languages.

In syntactic structure, the smallest units that must be posited are not words but morphemes which, as we have seen, are the smallest identifiable units with constant meaning or grammatical function. If a word has no smaller meaning-bearing parts, the word itself is a morpheme. The word *dogs*, for instance, may be broken down into the morphemes *dog* and *s*; *unfavourable* into *un*, *favour*, and *able*.

Usually, one of the morphemes in a polymorphemic word may be regarded as the core, or root, to which the others are successively added as prefixes (preroot elements) or suffixes (postroot elements) to form successively larger units. *Dog* and *favour*, are the roots in the words cited above. Prefixes and suffixes adhere to the roots in layers that constitute the morphological structure of the complex words.

Perhaps the most common morphological process among the world's languages is affixation, in which an affix morpheme, normally with a grammatical, as opposed to a lexical, function, is added to a stem morpheme. In English, the type of affixation used in verb inflection is suffixation (for example, walk-ed, walk-s, walking). Many other languages use prefixation (for example, Kiswahili *tembea*, "walk," (a-)li-tembea, "he/she walked"; Kalenjiin *bir* "beat up," ka-bir "he/she beat up..." (Cf. Malone, GME 1993). Affixation with respect to verbs will not feature much in the ancient Egyptian-Kalenjiin comparative exercise because the primary sources of words in hieroglyphics exhibit a major shortcoming in this respect. The verbs are retained in their root form and the reader is left to make out from context the appropriate tense in any given situation. For example, the verb  *wbn* "rise" in the sentence     *wbn re m pt* could convey any of: "the sun rises in the sky"; "the sun rose in the sky"; "the sun will rise in the sky"; "when the sun rises in the sky"; "when the sun rose in the sky," etc. (Gardiner. 1927:36). But that is because the scribe did not bother to inflect, i.e. affix an article that would indicate the tense of the verb stem  *wbn*. He left it to the reader to apply according to the context and pronounce accordingly. The altered pronunciation and the spelling of the modified verb we do not for now know. Therefore this exercise will not make use of comparative verb inflection because our constraint is to compare like items and yet in this case we are denied one.

But just for the record and simply put, Kalenjiin prefixes a morpheme to a verb root in order to modify it to the past tense and suffixes a morpheme to a verb root when it is required either in the present or future tense. The verb stem *cham*, "like," for example, behaves as follows: *ka-cham* "he/she/it liked," *cham-e* either "he/she/it likes" or "he/she/it will like." The prefixal morpheme, which is an equivalent of the English auxiliary verbs "has" or "had," applies according to the time of the action as follows: *ka-* (a while ago), *ko-* (yesterday) and *ki-* (the day before yesterday and earlier). The suffixal morpheme for the present and future tense is very often an *e* if the object is in the third person and is only seldom an *i* as in *isib-i*, "he/she/it follows..." or "he/she/it will follow." But if the person is being followed either towards the speaker or towards the second person, the suffixal morpheme becomes a *u*: *isib-u*.

Ancient Egyptian-Kalenjiin comparative morphological process however has better luck with respect to the affixation to the nominal, or lexical items. This exercise will therefore be in a position to compare the inflectional systems, e.g. how a word changes by inflectional means from a substantive (or primary noun form) to an indefinite or definite form. An example is Kalenjiin root morpheme *moo* “tummy,” “belly,” etc. becoming *mo-eet* “the belly” or “a belly,” by the addition of the post-root or suffixal morpheme *-eet*. The ancient Egyptian language will be shown to follow this rule in an identical manner.

The formation of nouns by addition of post-root morphemes to verbs will also be demonstrated. For example, the verb root  *mn* “be ill,” with the addition of a *-t* () suffix, transforms it into the noun  *mn-t* “sickness” (Gardiner, 1927:615, B.Dict:296). Kalenjiin language will be shown to conform to this rule in an identical manner.

The affixation of a gender discriminating prefix to nouns will also be demonstrated. The favourite prefix *t-* for feminine gender items and *p-* for masculine gender items, a prominent feature in both Kalenjiin and Coptic—and by extension, ancient Egyptian—will also be demonstrated.

The foregoing practical examples demonstrate the effectiveness of the comparative morphological exercise in word or noun formation when applied for investigation between a pair of languages that share certain features such as Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian. Word-formation may be classified in terms of form (affixation, compounding, ablaut, and so on) or function. The most common functional classification of morphology is that of inflection and derivation.

Linguists believe that:

“inflectional morphology characteristically involves relatively tight systems of grammatical marks—most commonly but not always affixes—on one lexical item without change in part of speech. In grammars, the inflected forms of a given lexical item are frequently grouped into paradigms” (Malone, GME 1993).

Part of the above demonstration, however, indicates that both the Kalenjiin language and the ancient Egyptian language are capable of effecting change in part of speech by adding post root elements to the roots such as verbs thus rendering them into nouns. Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian alike can also, by means of morpheme inflection, make nouns out of adjectives in the same predictable manner as in the foregoing.

Infixation

Infixation may be similar in a number of ways to ablaut, but in its strictest application, it is more or less a feature confined to the Semitic languages and may only be used here as a means of ruling out the ancient Egyptian and the Kalenjiin languages from the Semitic stock. An example of infixation is the internal flexion of the Semitic languages; the stem consists of a consonantal framework—the root—and the affix consists of vowels within that framework—the scheme. In the Hebrew word *halakh*, “walked,” *h-l-kh* is “walk” and *a-a* signals the past tense (Cf. Malone b, GME 1993).

Kalenjiin, however, features a limited amount of Semitic-type infixation in certain verbal and nominal forms e.g. respectively: *bir*, *bar*, and *boor* “beat up,” “raid/kill” and “prosper” (from raided property). These words seem to be bound to a consonantal frame *b-r*—a typical Semitic feature. The Kalenjiin words: *Iliel*, *ilaal*, *liil*, *iila*: meaning “flash” v., “kindle,” “beam” v. and “thunder” respectively, exhibit a Semitic internal flexion tendency. However, in order to change tense, where applicable, Kalenjiin still needs to add a prefix, a suffix, or both, where Semitic would make do with merely changing the internal vowels within the root.

Summary of Part II: Comparative Linguistics

Comparative linguistics, or comparative philology, involves the evaluation of the genetic relationship between languages that the researcher has intuitively predetermined to warrant a study on the basis of a number of similarities. Put in another way, this is the study of the development of a language, its dialects, or language stages, and the comparison of the linguistic systems over two or more historical periods vis a vis a possible genetic unity, form the stuff of this sub-discipline.

Contrastive linguistics, on the other hand, has similar aims to an extent. It may involve studying languages that are not genetically related but which may share a feature or structure typologically speaking, that enables or constitutes an excuse for a contrastive analysis work. Such a study is necessarily synchronic in that the historical development of the languages, dialects, or language stages being contrasted is not studied. No effort to investigate a possible historical and genetic unity is made. All emphasis of study is laid on the relationship, or the systematic lack of it, here and now.

It is left for the researcher to use his or her intuition a priori in deciding whether, given the seeming similarities in linguistic features or consistently differing features therefrom, it is worthwhile launching into comparative linguistics work within a group or between a pair of languages that exhibit such shared characteristics.

Typological linguistics focuses on clusters of languages that are characterised by certain common features but which may never be genetically related. An example is the similar basic word order between English and Kiswahili: Kiswahili and English

would be lumped together in a typological cluster that is defined by the SVO word order characteristic but have little else in common. Typological linguistics, therefore, is of limited use to comparative linguistics.

Specialists in comparative grammar study similar forms in related languages to discover how languages may have resulted from or influenced one another. Grammatical elements and vocabulary are shown by comparative grammar to exhibit regular correspondences in both sound and meaning. The linguist's comparative work, like in any other discipline, assumes a priori that such patterned similarities are not accidental.

We have demonstrated the importance of basic words to comparative analysis. Such are the words in any language that are so vital in day to day life that they are inherited almost in as much the same way as the colour of skin and almost as hard to drop or adopt. If any two languages have a reasonable number of such words in common, then they are bound to be genetically related, i.e., descend from one proto-language.

We have explored basic word order as an important feature exhibited by genetically related languages—this sometimes being a symptom of deeper relationships inherent in other linguistic forms such as lexicon and the wider syntactic structure.

We have also demonstrated the importance of morphology to the study of word or noun formation by means of inflexion. It has been shown that the researcher who intends to employ comparative linguistics will want to confirm that the languages being compared form words in a similar manner, or in a consistently parallel manner, by affixing, modifying or dropping certain morphemes. If indeed such consistency obtains between a pair of languages that are being compared, then it follows that those languages are genetically related.

Introduction to Part III

The central object of this Part is to attempt to present the incidence of lexical (vocabulary) and syntactical (grammatical) agreement between the ancient Egyptian language (together with Coptic) and the Kalenjiin language—as spoken today—as evidence of the two sets of speakers’ unity in antiquity. The consequence of incorporating a linguistic discussion is that if historical unity of language is ascertainable thereby, then historical unity with regard to the other cultural aspects of life, of which language is the chief outward expression and preserver, must be found to be ascertainable too. That, therefore, any seeming evidence of historical unity within the cultural area must be taken seriously in tandem with the proven linguistic unity in antiquity. A concise amount of linguistic evidence, as presented, should prove that there was a historical moment of cultural unity between the people of ancient Egypt and the ancestors of the Kalenjiin. An attempt is made to establish ancient Egyptian-Kalenjiin cognates in the important comparative linguistics “litmus paper” areas of: lexicostatistical analysis, word order analysis, gender discrimination, noun formation, reduplication, the causative, and negation.

CHAPTER 6

How Important is a Linguistics Discussion to an Oral Tradition Investigating Process?

At least two of the published and unpublished books from this series discuss, and use as investigative tools, aspects of religion and elements of culture as manifested in religion and vice versa. Religion is one cultural expression of the people and language is religion's most important vehicle. Religion and language belong together to one culture as culture belongs to them. All three are the expressions that enable us to identify and define a given ethnic group as being this or that, or as belonging to one or the other larger sociocultural grouping, and to differentiate it from all the others.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, the eminent French anthropologist (1958:68–69), has related language to culture as follows:

“The relationship between language and culture is an exceedingly complicated one. In the first place, language can be said to be a result of culture: The language which is spoken by one population is a reflection of the total culture of the population. It is one of those things which make up a culture... and culture includes many things, such as tools, institutions, customs, beliefs, and also, of course, language... Language can be said to be a condition of culture because the material out of which language is built is of the same type as the material out of which the whole culture is built: logical relations, oppositions, correlations, and the like. Language, from this point of view, may appear as laying a kind of foundation for the more complex structures which correspond to the different aspects of culture.”

We can extract at least five major points from Lévi-Strauss' statement with a view to justifying our engagement in linguistic enquiry into a claim that seems to lie within sociocultural and historical realm:

1. *Lévi-Strauss*: “The language which is spoken by one population is a reflection of the total culture of the population.” If language reflects the total culture of a population, then a demonstration to the effect that the Kalenjin language was genetically related to the ancient Egyptian language, would confirm that the ancient Egyptian culture and the Kalenjin culture that were reflected by genetically related languages, were also genetically related. That the religious aspects of culture that were characterised by the worship of Isis (together with or as a composite of the other ancient Egyptian “gods” and

“goddesses”) and Asiis of the Kalenjiin respectively, ought also to have been genetically related in tandem with the genetic relationship of the languages that were used to express them.

2. *Lévi-Strauss*: “But one can also say that language is a *part* of culture of the population”: if it could be proven that the languages were genetically related, it would by the same fact have been confirmed that at least one part of culture was cognate. And if one part has been proven to be cognate, then the remainder ought, surely, to have a proportionate level of cognateness as well. If not, then we will need to redefine the word “cognate” to exclude genetics and not, as described by *The Oxford Dictionary*: “*Of or pertaining to kinship; descended from a common ancestor.*”
3. *Lévi-Strauss*: “It (language) is one of those things which make up a culture... and culture includes many things, such as tools, institutions, customs, beliefs, and also, of course, language.” If we can successfully carry out a comparative linguistics analysis on a set of genetically related languages, these being one component of culture, then in doing this, we will be analysing part of the whole.
4. *Lévi-Strauss*: “Language can be said to be a condition of culture because the material out of which language is built is of the same type as the material out of which the whole culture is built: logical relations, oppositions, correlations, and the like.” If the material out of which two languages that are genetically related are built is the same as that of which the corresponding cultures are built in the manner described here by Lévi-Strauss, then the effort to prove the genetic relationship of the languages goes automatically to prove the genetic relationships of the cultures. It goes without saying that one way to prove the ancient unity of the cultures is to prove the ancient unity of the languages.
5. *Lévi-Strauss*: “Language, from this point of view (number 4 above), may appear as laying a kind of foundation for the more complex structures which correspond to the different aspects of culture.” Here then is explained, in one sentence, the purpose of this comparative linguistics-based study: namely, to lay the foundation for further research within other cultural aspects in a more or less similar comparative manner.

Any aspect of comparative linguistics, therefore, while serving as a provider of evidence of an ancient unity of a set of languages, also goes to serve as a vital tool in itself for the analysis of the rest of culture. This awareness was prompted not least by such statements as that which came from the pen of the great African scholar, Cheikh Anta Diop ([1948] 1996:36) who says that the study of African languages is of great historical importance to the Africans for they have no ancient writings. That, by studying how this language gave birth to another, we would succeed in building a sort of linguistic chain going from the earliest to the latest and thus get to know about a very important period of African history. “It would,

therefore, appear that knowledge of linguistics is required for African historical investigations.” A prominent western scholar was to echo him about twenty years later (1968). This was the American scholar who did a lot of work in Eastern Africa, Professor Christopher Ehret. He wrote a powerful statement in an East African historical journal. He says:

“There is no question that evidence drawn from the study of African languages is going to be a major source in the historians’ reconstruction of the African past, especially the more ancient past. It can provide a wealth of data where the traditional historical sources fail, e.g. for those periods before writing was known which are beyond the reach of oral tradition. It can give identity to cultures for which archaeology can only describe the material possessions, and detail to cultural events for which the evidence of comparative ethnology can only suggest the bare existence. Nevertheless linguistic evidence has so far been, hardly used at all in the writing of African history, probably because few historians know the variety of its uses” (Ehret, 1968).

The statement from Cheikh Anta Diop, the one from Professor Christopher Ehret, and the one further above from Lévi-Strauss, aptly summarise the essence and purpose of this linguistics work. We may reinforce their stand with Katičić’s (1970:1) views, with which we are already familiar, from Chapter 5, to the effect that the comparative method as the main tool of comparative linguistics serves to find out the data that are thought relevant for the establishment of genetic relationships. That, the results obtained by such research permit classification of the languages of the world in accordance with genetic criteria.

What we are seeking here is a genetic result with all the far-reaching implications of its positive findings to the understanding of history, anthropology, linguistics, etc. with regard to the Africans in general and to the Kalenjin in particular.

Lexicostatistical Analysis

Basic Words

As we described in Chapter 5, lexicostatistics involves judging degrees of linguistic relationship on the basis of the frequency of shared features. For the purpose of either simple counting or weighting, the researcher may elect to use any shared features within the areas of: vocabulary, inflectional morphemes, syntactic patterns, and even cultural features. However, as Bennett puts it, the most commonly used type of data is lexical, i.e. vocabulary, because the amount of data in this area is critical and counts of linguistic features other than lexicon are rare, owing to the fact that there simply are not enough phonemes or verbal constructions in some target dead languages (Cf. Bennett, 1998:34).

The most telling of all with regard to the position of the Kalenjin language within the Hamitic family of languages that is epitomised by ancient Egyptian is, perhaps, the sharing of the *basic words* of language between Kalenjin and Coptic/ancient

Egyptian. Apart from the above-mentioned reason of relatively readier availability, basic words interest linguists because they are known to be highly resistant to change in response either to changes in social and political environment or to the lapse of time. The basic words of language relate to the vital elements of day-to-day life, and are generally the first words of any language to be learned by children.

Professor Christopher Ehret (1971) who has studied eastern African languages and histories a great deal, and John Albert Distefano after him (1985), considered a stock of “ninety core vocabulary items, terms generally deemed by linguists to be most resistant to change and borrowing” (Distefano 1985:35), adequate for the purpose of computation of degrees of mutual intelligibility (via cognate counting) between eastern African languages. On the basis of that stock, the two variously found out, for example, that Nandi and Tugen (Samorr section) dialects of Kalenjiin shared 88–89 per cent of the basic stock of words. Pokoot and Nandi had 76–78 per cent in common while the more distant Tatoog of Tanzania came lowest, in this language group, with a 43–50 per cent degree of basic-word affinity with Nandi.

Two other related language groups, but which are immediately outside the Kalenjiin grouping, the Maa(sai) and (Dho)Luo languages, fared as follows according to Ehret’s counting: the Maasai-Nandi basic word affinity was determined at 21 per cent while Luo-Nandi basic word affinity was determined at 20 per cent. Maasai and Luo had a basic word stock sharing between themselves of 18 per cent.

A word of caution is needed, however, if we were to accept the respective intra-Kalenjiin lexicostatistical comparison work of Ehret and Distefano. The concept is sound and much work was done but the two were severely limited by their relative unfamiliarity with the languages and the numerous dialects and sub-dialects that they tried to handle.

For instance, Distefano’s (1985:255–273) basic word cognate counting between Nandi and Kipsigiis dialects of Kalenjiin yielded an 85 per cent cognate relationship. But this exercise was fraught with obvious mistakes in the compilation of the gloss that Distefano employed. According to him, Nandi and Kipsigiis differ in the following 14 items out of the 90 standard basic wordlist that he used. He is largely mistaken and the following corrections are necessary:

1. “Warm”: KIPSIGIIS *belebi(ik)*, NANDI *lalang*’. Correction: both say *lalang*’, *bele-biik* = “it burns people” = “hot” in both dialects.
2. “Good”: KIPSIGIIS *kararaneen*, NANDI *mie*. Correction: to both Nandi and Kipsigiis *mie* = “good” but *karaaran* = “beautiful,” “nice,” again in both dialects.
3. “Drink” v.: KIPSIGIIS *eet* (this is an outright mistake); both KIPSIGIIS and NANDI say *yee* for all liquids except milk. “Drink” where milk is concerned is *lu* and *yee* if used with regard to milk would be considered almost blasphemous.

4. “See”: KIPSIGIIS *keer*, NANDI *iroo*, correction: difference is almost genuine. The Nandi, however, may use *keer* depending on grammatical convenience, e.g. *a-keer-e*, “I am seeing” because *i-roo* does not lend itself to participial usage equivalent to “is seeing,” “will be seeing,” or “was seeing.”⁴⁹
5. “Bark”: KIPSIGIIS *magateet*, NANDI *perteet*, correction: both say *perteet*. *Magateet* is “skin” of a smaller animal, e.g. goat.
6. “Dog”: KIPSIGIIS *ng’ookto*, NANDI *seseet*, no correction.
7. “Woman”: KIPSIGIIS *kwoondo*, NANDI *Koorgo*, correction: *kwoondo* is “a wife” and *koorgo* is “woman,” or “female” in both dialects.
8. “Breast”: KIPSIGIIS *tigen* (?) NANDI *kineet*, correction: both say *kineet* (originally referring to “teat”; “breast” = *murungu* strictly speaking).
9. “Seed”: KIPSIGIIS *tendereek*, NANDI *kesuy*, correction: both use *keswo/kesui/* and *keswoot/kesweek*. *Tendereek* refers to the seeds of pumpkins, watermelon, gourds and the like.
10. “Skin”: KIPSIGIIS *muyto*, NANDI *iririo*, correction: to both KIPSIGIIS and NANDI *muy-to* is “ox-hide” and *iririo* is “skin of humans” and thin strips of any skin.
11. “Go”: KIPSIGIIS *ba*, NANDI *ui*, correction: *ui* is “go” for one person and *ba* is its plural and the rule applies to both KIPSIGIIS and NANDI.
12. “Sit”: KIPSIGIIS *bur*, NANDI *tep*, correction: KIPSIGIIS uses both *bur* and *tep*.
13. “Give”: KIPSIGIIS *kuita* (*koita?*), NANDI *nemu*, correction: Distefano tried to compare different words here: “give out” and “take out” respectively. The right root word for “give out (to a named recipient)” is *-koch-*, “give (to speaker)” is *-kon-* and “give out (generally)” is *-koite-n*. These words and rules apply to both KIPSIGIIS and NANDI.
14. “Night”: KIPSIGIIS *keng’or* (?), NANDI *kemboi*, correction: *keng’or* seems to be a misplaced word here: KIPSIGIIS say *kemoi* and NANDI say *kemboi* for “night.”

We can see from the foregoing that out of the ninety basic words chosen by Ehret and Distefano for cognate counting, Kipsigiis and Nandi differ on only two items: “see”—although only partially—and “dog.” They agree on the remaining 88 and this yields a 97–98% cognation and not the 85% that Distefano ended up with! The fact is that the Kipsigiis and the Nandi distinguish between one another more from intonation and less from syntactic structure, or the different words used in a given context. The same goes for the dialectal inter-relationship between the other central

⁴⁹ Hollis (1909:224), listed *iroo* as an irregular verb in Nandi that does not lend itself to the present tense where instead *-keer-* or *-onyi-* were used: *akeere* or *aonyii* = “I am seeing.”

Kalenjiin groups, Kipsigiis and Nandi included. A comparative analysis exercise on the basis of basic words for them is ill advised because such exercise assumes and ideally works on the basis of the existence of a significant difference, which in this case is, for all practical purposes, virtually absent. Distefano divides Kalenjiinland in Kenya for linguistic analysis purposes into three parts: Central, Northern and Mt. Elgon. But he has recognised too many dialects, including some spoken by a few score Ogieek families in the forests of Tinet, Timboroa and Mau. This author adopts the three divisions but based on reasons of dialectal similarities/differences, i.e. degrees of mutual intelligibility, and geography. The Central Kalenjiin group is considered to comprise: Kipsigiis, Nandi, Keiyo and the southern (Samorr-Lembus) sub-branch of the Tugen; The Northern Kalenjiin group is considered to comprise: Pokoot, Marakwet constituent groups and Arorr sub-branch of (North) Tugen, while the Mt. Elgon Kalenjiin group is considered to comprise the sections collectively known as Sabaoot—grouped together with the Terik of South Nandi for obvious dialectal reasons. The Ogieek may be regarded as constituting small distinct dialectal pockets in forest settlements attached to the larger communities but they are such numerical lightweights that their speech is often overwhelmed by the adjoining more dominant dialects.

Better luck in comparative work between such close dialects as Kipsigiis and Nandi may come by way of another common property platform, *a tertium comparationis*, outside the formal property of lexicon (Cf. Krzeszowski, 1990:4), and that is intonation for which, however, no form of notation has been put in place as yet in order to facilitate a comparative exercise based on it.

The list of *basic words* used in Ehret's exercise is described by Ehret (1971:9,29,94) as consisting of:

“names for major parts of the body and verbs for universally recognised actions like ‘to go’ and ‘to eat’... Word borrowing is rare in such parts of the vocabulary, and so the presence or lack of loanwords there is a measure of the strength of the influence represented by the loanword set.”

Under circumstances of long cross-cultural coexistence, and of vibrant engagement in trade, individual sets of human beings that speak different languages, may and do borrow and lend any number of trade, technical, and *general*, or *cultural* words, and expressions, from and to one another. But hardly would any one of them ever assimilate words of the *basic* type from the other languages in any significant quantities. Such words are too basic to drop, change, or adopt. The very basic word types have little to do with items of trade—with a notable exception of the numerals, of course. So interactions during trading activities do not necessitate the adoption and lending of words from this category.

A given ethnic community retains the majority of its basic stock of words for as long as it is in existence and for as long as it remains an entity distinguishable from the others. Ethnic communities that have lost their basic class of words in their entirety would, logically speaking, have earlier lost the more easily dispensable

cultural and secondary stock of words and are actually, therefore, in the condition of having dropped their own identities and languages altogether. They are in the position of having altogether adopted and assimilated other people's languages and identities as their own.

It is demonstrated Table 1 that 86 per cent, that is seventy-seven items of the Kalenjiin language's basic stock of ninety words, from the controlled list that was developed and used variously by Ehret and Distefano, are cognate to varying degrees with known words of ancient Egyptian dialects from the same category. 60 per cent, that is fifty-four of the ninety glosses on the list demonstrate a direct phonological and morphological resemblance, with the occasional minimal skewing with respect to vowels. Of the vowels, nobody is sure anyway as far as the words in hieroglyphics are concerned. There may be an additional external consonant but if the presence of such additional external consonant does not appear to affect the apparent root, the pair being compared is considered completely cognate. Each of such pairs of words scores one full point on the scale of cognateness. The words in the Coptic script, unlike those in the hieroglyphic script, can be regarded as being closer to the ancient pronunciation pattern because they are already fully vocalised.

The aspect of simple metathesis, i.e. the transposition of letters or sounds in a word, is an understandable skewing which should not affect the quality of cognateness of a pair. The word "see," for example, is rendered in Coptic **iorh** (*iorh*), but in Kalenjiin, it is rendered *iroo*. Here the /r/ and /o/ are transposed. Another good example of a metathesis case, but which is not included in the list of basic words

here, is the word for "weapon,"  *khanre* (B. Dict. 532a), which is rendered *Karin*, *karna* or *karnee(t)*, in Kalenjiin. Here the consonants /r/ and /n/ are transposed.

About 16 per cent (fourteen items) of the ninety items on the list exhibit a convincing semblance but suffer a skewing of one important consonant. Such pairs are awarded $\frac{2}{3}$ point on the scale of cognateness. A case of semantic shift within reasonable limits, like the ancient Egyptian word for the "sun" *ra* shifting in Kalenjiin to mostly mean "day" with only vague or circumstantial reference to the original meaning, falls within this category that earns $\frac{2}{3}$ point. The circumstantial, or mitigating, evidence here is that *ra* also meant "day" in ancient Egyptian as it does in Kalenjiin. The sun *ra*, which occasioned the day, gave its name to "the day." Clear evidence of semantic shift is, therefore, present here.⁵⁰

10 per cent (nine items) of the ninety glosses on the list earn only $\frac{1}{3}$ point each because of the presence of multiple skewing by way of the loss of an important consonant or two and/or the introduction of a strange one or two. This especially if it can only be explained by the inclusion of one or more other reasonably cognate pairs which convey the same meaning.

⁵⁰ We find a good example in Pokoot. The Pokoot call the "sun" *asiis* and also call the "day" *asiis*.

14 per cent (thirteen items) out of the ninety glosses exhibit a zero degree of cognateness. The thirteen either represent glosses that are completely lost to one of the two languages being compared or this reflects the unavailability of the items within the resources at the disposal of the author. In the same way, a more endowed database would perhaps yield different results for those pairs that scored $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of a point each.

In this connection, in order to relate to established theory what we will have achieved by way of the Kalenjiin/ancient Egyptian/Coptic lexicostatistical analysis that follows, we may remember, from Chapter 5, Krzeszowski's statement to the effect that in cross-language comparison, there are three possibilities out of any comparison of given properties: identical in some respects and/or different in some respects, or there may be no equivalence at all. That, if X represents an item being compared in both languages and L_i represents one language and L_j the other, the three possibilities can be presented as follows: 1) $XL_i = XL_j$, 2) $XL_i \neq XL_j$, 3) $XL_i = \odot L_j$ (Cf. 1990:38). In our case here, a full score, which is represented by 60 per cent of the selected Egypto-Kalenjiin lexical items, describes the $XL_i = XL_j$ scenario, while the $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ point scores, representing a total of 26 per cent of the lexical items, relate to the $XL_i \neq XL_j$ scenario in differing degrees. The remainder 14 per cent of the selected lexical items which bear no resemblance with respect to any characteristic, demonstrate the $XL_i = \odot L_j$ scenario.

Basic Word List

Table 1: A lexicostatistical analysis, Kalenjiin-Ancient Egyptian/Coptic

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
1. I	ⲁⲛⲟⲕ/ⲁⲛ	anok/an	anee/anii	1
2. you	 III	un B164a	inyee/inysin	1
3. we	ⲁⲛⲟⲛ	anon	echeek/acheek. cf. ichan/inendet ⁵¹	1
4. all	ⲧⲏⲗⲟⲩ/ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ	tiilu/tiiru C424	tugul	1
5. many	ⲛⲁⲩⲱⲩ/ⲁⲩⲱⲁⲓ	nashe/ashai	chaang' cf. chaa (Barao) ⁵²	$\frac{2}{3}$
6. one	 	ue/uee B153a	ageenge	
7. two	ⲙⲏⲁⲩⲱ, II	snav, senui B673b	aeng'	
8. three	ⲩⲟⲩⲱⲧ	shom't	somok	1
9. four	ⲩⲱⲧⲟⲩ	ftou	ang'wan	

⁵¹ Of Cherang'any and Keiyo of Kamariny (Distefano, 1985:259).

⁵² Barao are a "previously unrecorded" branch of Ogieek Kalenjiin living in Mau Forest—Distefano, 1985:38.

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
10. five	(1) 𓂏𓂐𓂑 (2) 𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒	(1) tiu (five) (2) mehtiu (fifth)	muut (five ⁵³)	1
11. big	(1)  (2) 𓂏𓂐𓂑	(1) au B2 (2) ouu B2	oo/woo	1
12. small	(1)  (2) 	(1) netch (2) ketit (small, baby)	(1) nwach (short) (2) kiteen/kitigin, ming'in	1
13. long		kzi/qai F275 B760a	kooi (long/tall ⁵⁴)	1
14. warm	𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒𓂓𓂔𓂕	hma/uhmom	oo-ma or lalang'	1
15. cold	(1) 𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒𓂓𓂔𓂕 (2) 𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒𓂓𓂔𓂕	(1) hrosh/oorsh/erash C16 (2) ginhroosh (coldness) C530a	Koriis, kaitit	2/3
16. new	(1) 𓂏𓂐𓂑, 𓂏𓂐𓂑 (2) 	(1) bire(?), shai, C43 (2) uatch B150a	(1) leel, ren (Pook), rel (Pokoot) (2) iish (Tatoog) ⁵⁵	1/3
17. good	𓂏𓂐𓂑, 𓂏𓂐𓂑	Amoi, mio	miee	1
18. dry	(1) 𓂏𓂐𓂑 𓂏𓂐𓂑 (2) 	(1) haam ebol (2) khem (be dry) F190/Cf. B547a ⁵⁶	(1) yaam, kiyaam kemei (2) (drought/famine)	1
19. black	𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒	kiimme C109–110	tui ⁵⁷ , kimiiso (black ox, very dark man), kemoi (dark, dark of night)	1/3
20. white	𓂏𓂐𓂑	alev	leel	2/3

⁵³ The ancient Egyptian scribes rendered “five” 𓂏𓂐𓂑 or 𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒 (B.Dict. 868) whose sound, like in the case of many of the other numerals, is not known.

⁵⁴ Other Kalenjiin: k3y (Pook); gaaw (Tatoog); Kaai (Ogieek)—Distefano, 1985:261.

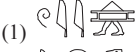
⁵⁵ Most Kalenjiin branches say *leel* for “new,” which also means “white.” *Iish* of the Tatoog seems to have retained a semblance of one Coptic/ancient Egyptian version which is variously rendered: *shai* and *uash* here.



Khem is “to be hot, to be dry” comparable to *kiyaam* from Pokoot which is also the proto-Kalenjiin reconstruction by Distefano (1985:263) and *kemei* “drought/dry season/famine.” As for the Coptic 𓂏𓂐𓂑 𓂏𓂐𓂑 *haam ebol*, the operative word is *haam* “dry” which corresponds to Kalenjiin *yaam*; the word *ebol* corresponds in function to the English “up” in “dry up” although *ebol* really means “out” as in “come out.”

⁵⁷ Crum recorded ancient Egyptian proper names for individuals of notable darkness in skin pigmentation in Greek: Πκιμης (*Pkiimis*), Πκαμῆ (*Pkamei*); Τκαμῆ (*Tkamei* = *Takamei*?) etc.—p.110. These tally with the Kalenjiin practice as recorded by Hollis (1909): Kalenjiin for “black ox” and “black cow” respectively are *kimiiso* and *chemiiso*. The same could be extended to individuals of very dark complexion in relation to the general complexion of the community. Kalenjiin suggests that the root of the word is *mis* as the same is used in *tui-mis* “jet black.”

As the ancient Egyptians also referred to their land as “Black Land” *Kemet*, from  B 243b (*kemmoi* as in Kalenjiin and Coptic for “darkness of night” or “night” *keemoi*?) an investigation as to whether the other old name for Egypt, *Misiri*, is formed from the same root *mis* as hinted by Kalenjiin may be called for. The author is, nevertheless, aware of the informal Coptic tradition that *Misri* or *Masri* may be traced to “Born of Ra/Ri” but finds no credible support for it.

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
21. red	(1) πηρω, πτηρός	piirsh (red-coloured substance, rust, red blight, red earth, etc), purros C269b & 432b	piriir (red) adj.	1
22. green	οὔωτ, ἀνκ	uwoot/liik (green, fresh) C493	iwoot (the wet season—of green grass), nyalil ⁵⁸	
23. eat	(1)  (2) οὔω	(1) aam B28 (2) uoam	am	1
24. drink		hems B485b	yee, moos	1/3
25. bite	(1)  (2) 	(1) set B706b (2) usha B185b	sus, sa ⁵⁹ sus-eet (biting n.)	2/3
26. see	σοῦπ, ιορ, χερ	soun (look at/know), iorh (see), ger (examine)	suee-n, iroo, keer	1
27. hear	(1) τκλς (2) σωτ (3) χε σωτ	(1) tikas (give ear, listen) (2) sootm (3) ge sootm C212, 363	kas (listen/hear)	1
28. know	ποει	noei	nai	1
29. sleep	 ζωπ/ρλσος (Crum)	setcher/s-darro ⁶⁰ hoor(u)p/rasui	Ru, rru (Ong'om)	1
30. die	μω	mu	me	1
31. kill	(1) μωωωτ (2) παρς (3) 	(1) muut (2) pars (3) besh B223b	(1) muut (smite) (2) par-iis (3) bagach (Mt. Elgon Kalenjiin)	1
32. go	(1)  (2) 	(1) ui (2) aua B32, 157	ui, wa, ba	1
33. come	πνο, πο, εζοπ	niu, nu ehun (come in) ⁶¹	nyoon	1

⁵⁸ The *iwoot*, rainy season, of Kalenjiin, ushers in plenty of green grass. That *iwoot* also referred to “green” in ancient times is now lost to the Kalenjiin and can only be inferred from studying Coptic and ancient Egyptian’s related words.

⁵⁹ The *sa* version is Pook. Interestingly Sapiiny of Uganda and Tatoog of Tanzania say *kanyat* and *qanyad* respectively in the place of the more widespread *sus* (Cf. Distefano, 1985:363).

⁶⁰ Budge’s Hieroglyphic Dictionary 718b transcribes it *setcher* but the characters  and  respectively read *dar* and *ro*, hence the author’s *s-darro*.

⁶¹ C219–221. It is probable that the Copts used letter π, /n/ for both the sound of /n/ and the East African /ny/ as in “Kenya” or as in the /gn/ of Cognac.

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
34. sit	(1)  (2) ⲧⲁⲩⲧⲟⲛ	(1) hdb F181 (2) te-mton	(1) tep (2) tepooten	1
35. stand	ⲧⲟⲟⲩⲛ, ⲧⲟⲓⲁⲉ	toun, toile	tonoon, telel	1
36. Give	(1) ⲧ (2)  (3)   	(1) ti (2) erta (give)? B436 (3) eqa B139b ⁶²	(1) ti, tete (Marakwet), (2) root (give present) (3) -kooch-in (other Kal.)	1
37. speak	ⲙⲱⲩⲧⲉ ⲙⲱⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲩⲛ	mute mute ehun	mwa (speak) mwaite(n) (announce)	1
38. sun	(1)  (2)   	(1) ra (the sun, the day) B417b (2) shu B731b	(1) ra (today) (2) asiis-ta (the sun)	2/3
39. moon	(1)    (2)   	(1) ar-t-aabt (the moon) B68a (2) aeoh B29b	araawa, arawet	2/3
40. star	(1)    (2)   	(1) khakha (2) tchet-t B 528a, 913b	(1) kookel, (2) kechei-aat	2/3
41. water	(1)    (2)    (3) ⲙⲟⲟⲩ/ⲙⲁⲟⲩ	(1) inu B143a (2) pakha (a drink) ⁶³ (3) mou/mau	oino (river) maiyo (liquor) pei (water) peeka (water in Mt. Elgon Kal.)	1/3
42. rain	ⲩⲣⲱ	chroo (fine rain, dew)	roop (rain)	
43. cloud	(1)    (2) ⲕⲁⲟⲟⲁⲉ	(1) kepi (Coptic ⲩⲏⲡⲉ [chiipe]) B793b (2) kloole C104	pool, pool-teet ⁶⁴	
44. night	(1) ⲣⲟⲩⲟⲩⲁⲉ, (2) ⲕⲙⲙⲙⲉ (3)   	(1) ruuhe (evening) (2) kmiime/kmeme (dark of night) C110 (3) qerhu B776a	(1) oro (night—Tot) (2) keemoi (3) kee-ru (to sleep)	1
45. smoke		het B516b	iyet	1
46. fire	  	m'hatti B284b	maat/maata	1

⁶² Mii “give” of the Luo Language (Dholuo), is found in both Coptic and ancient Egyptian.

⁶³ Faulkner p.93. transliterated as *pkh3*, which from Mt. Elgon Kalenjiin experience should be read *peeka* “water.”

⁶⁴ The Kalenjiin *pool* seems to relate to the Canaanite Lord of the Clouds, Rain and the Storm, Ba'al adopted and rendered by the Egyptians    (B.Dict. 213b).

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
47. ash	ⲕⲉⲣⲁⲓ/ⲕⲣⲁⲛ	Kermi/kermec	or	
48. path	(1)  (2) ⲁⲉⲣⲡ	(1) her-t B130 (2) heir	or-eet	1
49. mountain	(1) ⲧⲠⲁ/ⲧⲠⲉ (2) 	(1) tol/tu (2) qaa B761a	(1) tul-wo (2) koi ⁶⁵	1
50. tree		kht ⁶⁶	keet	1
51. leaf	 or 	seq or seqa B625b	sok, sokoo, sokoon	1
52. bark		paet-t (kinds of barks, woods used in medicine) B231b	peer, pertet	2/3
53. fish	ⲕⲠⲉⲁⲛⲧ	kulhot C107	kawalyat (Soi Keiyo), njir- ⁶⁷	1
54. bird		dryt (bird, kite)-F323	tariit	1
55. dog	(1)  (2) 	(1) ash (dog, jackal) B10a (2) St (Set the dog-headed evil “god”) ⁶⁸	sese-et, ng’ook	2/3

⁶⁵ *Koi* is an old Kalenjiin word for “hill/mountain” or “highland” as preserved in Koi-legeen (Mt. Kenya), Koi-bateek (the highland/hill of bamboo which has given its name to Koibatek area of Baringo County). The word *koi* now generally means “stone.” Budge’s transcription of  as *qaa* is a mistake and should be *qooi* from the word for “high” in both Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian——F275.

⁶⁶ As in  *kht* k3, “high tree”—Gardiner, 1927:S 92. This *kht* k3 “high, or tall tree” should probably be transcribed *keet kooi* as hinted by the Kalenjiin equivalent for “tall tree.”

⁶⁷ The rare Kalenjiin *kawalyaat* for “fish,” is from Distefano (1985:268) who also gives *kwar-* as the proto-Southern Nilotic root for “fish.” The Coptic ⲕⲠⲉⲁⲛⲧ (*kulhot*) supplied by Crum, refers to a specific type of fish, *clarias anguillaris*. Traditional Kalenjiin custom disallowed the eating of fish and presently being generally physically removed from fish producing areas, the words for “fish” and the separate species, can hardly be considered a basic word for them.

⁶⁸  (B706b& var.) should either be transcribed *Set*, *seseet* or *suiyoot*. Set is the widely known form of the name of the evil “god” of ancient Egypt who was portrayed in the image of a dog. *Seseet* and *suiyoot* are

the respective Kalenjiin names for “dog” and “wild dog/wolf.” The rendering  which is transcribed *ash* by Budge may relate to the implied Kalenjiin name for the canine family, *kip-ois*. The root here is *ois* and the clan whose emblem (totem) is the jackal is called *Kip-ois*—“of *ois*.” Budge’s *ash* may be compared to *ois* with the fact in mind that the ancient Egyptian *sh* sound has generally contracted to a plain *s* sound in Kalenjiin and that Budge’s transcription, like that of the other Egyptologists, is only an approximation, especially as to the vowel sounds.

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
56. louse	K&KTE, NIK&KTE	kakte, nikakte C102	nyoktoota (Omotik Ogieek Kal.), nyogduud (Tatoog) ⁶⁹ isir-yaat is more widespread	1
57. person	(1)  (2) 	(1) sh/zi (person/man) ⁷⁰ (2) met B331a	(1) chii (person/man) (2) meiwoot (Omotik Kal.) ⁷¹	1
58. man	(1) p&æe, (2) 	(1) roome (2) remth	muren	1/3
59. woman	(1)  (2)  (3) 	(1) khent (a lady in a harem, a concubine) B558a (2) s[a]-t B583a (3) rekha-t (wise woman, i.e. Isis) B430a ⁷²	(1) kwoon-to (a woman, a wife) (2) chepyoseet (3) korgeet (a woman)	1
60. meat	Δϣ	af C23	pany, peento	
61. bone	(1)  (2)  (3) 	(1) akhakh B9a (2) qas B765a (3) qrs B765a	kawa, kaweeek (bone, bones) karaas (rib bone)	1
62. oil (fat)	(1)  (2) 	(1) mehti (oil, unguent) B318b (2) merh-t B315a	(1) mwaa-i-ta (2) mwar/mwarta (Northern Kal.) ⁷³	1

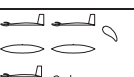
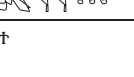
⁶⁹ Distefano, 1985:268. Distefano suggests a reconstruction of *nyok-* as the proto-Nilotic root for “louse.” We may note that between Omotik and Tatoog branches of Kalenjiin, the ancient Egyptian word for “louse/lice” has been preserved as corroborated by Coptic.

⁷⁰ Gardiner p. 442 & 618.

⁷¹ Distefano ascribes *meiwoot* for “person” to the Omotik (B) who are an Ogieek branch of Kalenjiin (1985:267). *Meiwoot* to other Kalenjiin generally refers to a hired labour for farm work, especially, but not exclusively, from the agricultural communities—the *meek* (pl. for *meiwoot*)—as opposed to the *porop* of the pastoral communities.

⁷² It is a finding of this study that the ancient Egyptian letter  /r/ in some cases, at the initial position, corresponds to the sound *kar* or *kor* of Kalenjiin: e.g.  *rn*, “name” corresponds to *karn-a*, “name” in Kalenjiin;  *r-kht* “weapons” (F. Dict.146) is Kalenjiin *kariik* or *kirok-ta*, “weapons” or “a knobkerrie” or “a stick”;  *rshwt* “joy” (ibid. 153) is Kalenjiin *karaaset* from the root *ras*, “be joyful,” “be positively proud” (occasionally negative)—ancient Egyptian  *rsh* “joyful” (ibid.153);  *rd* “foot” which is close to Kalenjiin *kwariaat* “ankle.”

⁷³ Distefano, 1985:265. Distefano, following Ehret (1971), says that the proto-Nilotic word was *mwar*—which is highly convincing considering that the northern Kalenjiin: Marakwet groups, Cherang’any, and Pokoot, have retained the forms *mwar* and *mwarta* which are readily traceable to ancient Egyptian. As we saw in Chapter 4, it appears ancient Egyptian too treated certain diphthongs in the same manner as do the northern Kalenjiin where what is, say, /ai/ in central and southern Kalenjiin dialects, ancient Egyptian and northern Kalenjiin render it /ar/ and often /agh/ in Pokoot; /ei/ becomes /er/. A good example that we gave was *pei*, “water,”

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
63. horn	(1)  (2) 	koons C422a hen-t B488b	kuino kuin-eet	$\frac{2}{3}$
64. tail	(1)  (2)  (3)  (4) 	(1) er-er (rump, tail?) B129b (2) er-t (tail) B129b (3) set B706b (4) sir-pata (fly whisk) B647b ⁷⁴	saruur saruur-yet (also fly whisk)	$\frac{2}{3}$
65. feather		shu-t B733a	koroor, korooryet, songool-yet (of ostrich) ⁷⁵	
66. hair		smat B600b	suumei	1
67. head		moti (skull) C12	mot (Tot Marakwet) ⁷⁶ met	1
68. ear		aten (itin?) ⁷⁷	iit (ear), iitin (ears)	1
69. eye	(1)  (2) 	(1) ar ⁷⁸ (2) bal	kong', koon-ta	
70. nose		Sher-t B750a	ser-uut	1

which is rendered in northern Markweeta *per*; central and southern Kalenjiin *yai*, “do,” “make,” is rendered in both Markweeta and ancient Egyptian *yir*, or *ir*; *mach* or *mai*, “want,” “love” in central and southern Kalenjiin dialects, as in Coptic, is rendered in Markweeta and ancient Egyptian *mer*. We saw that central and southern Kalenjiin *ei*, *euut*, “hand,” was rendered in Markweeta, *eeruu*. So the “Creator” is translated *Iriin* in Markweeta where in central and southern Kalenjiin dialects this is rendered *Yaiin*. It follows that the newly published New Testament in Markweeta is completely devoid of diphthongs, i.e., combination of vowels such as /ai/, /ia/, /ei/, /oi/, /eu/, etc., which are common and clear in the major dialects of Kalenjiin. As for Pokoot, the would-be diphthongs end up being pronounced and written /gh/, e.g., *poiisyo*, “work” in the central and southern dialects may be spelt and pronounced in Pokoot *poghiisyo*.

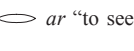
⁷⁴ The ancient Egyptian versions have to be read together to understand their relationship to the Kalenjiin *saruur* and *saruur-yet*.

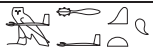
⁷⁵ It may be of interest to note that the name of the feathered headdress is cognate between Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian. The same word is another word for “feather” in ancient Egyptian and it is probable that that word for “feather” was dropped by the Kalenjiin language at some stage. However, the headdress, or crown, still goes

by the same name, *kuutwa*, ancient Egyptian  *kha-t* B 528a.

⁷⁶ Distefano, 1985:271. Strictly speaking “skull” in Kalenjiin is *terta* which approximates ancient Egyptian  B 910 wrongly transcribed as *tcheru*.

⁷⁷ Budge transcribes this *aten*, B 103a. However, since the reed sign  in  reads /i/ as in “it,” this hieroglyphic word should be transcribed *itin* according to the western Egyptologists’ own convention. However, Kalenjiin suggests *iit-in*, “ears.”

⁷⁸  *ar* “to see” B 68a, Coptic $\epsilon\iota\omega\rho\alpha$ (*eiyoorh*) and Kalenjiin *iroo*, “look,” “see,” “behold,” suggest that a common word for “eye” was, as preserved in hieroglyphics, originally  *ar-t* *ibid.* which perhaps should correctly be transcribed *roo-et*, the stem being *roo*.

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
71. mouth	 (1) (2) ρo/pe/λωoϣ	(1) re/ro ⁷⁹ (mouth/door/ gate/opening) (2) ro/re/loou	rorii (laugh), le (utter) oor (opening/way) kurgat (door/entrance/gate, etc.)	
72. tooth	(1) ϣκακεα (2) ϣαα (3) 	(1) shklkel gnashing/grinding of teeth-C556b (2) shal C556b (3) khenr B552b	keel/keel-at	1/3
73. tongue	(1) αΔC  (2) Δ	(1) las (2) nes-t B389 ⁸⁰	ng'elyep-ta, mesiit (Mt. Elgon), ng'ushabd (Tatoog) ⁸¹	1/3
74. nail	(1)  (2) 	(1) bun (claw, nail, talon) B215b (2) sha-t (claw of bird, talon) B722a	(1) pun-teet (Mt. Elgon) ⁸² (2) siiya/siy-eet	1
75. foot	(1) κεαΙ (2) σΔαοϣ	(1) keli (2) challog/kalog (both feet)—C491a	(1) keel- (2) keel-yeek (feet)	1
76. knee	κεαΙ	keli	kutung', keel = leg	2/3
77. hand	 (1) (2) τοοτ	(1) e B105a (2) toot	(1) ei (2) euut	1
78. belly	αΔατ	maht (bowels, intestines)	mo, mo-eet (bowels, intestines, belly)	1
79. neck	(1)  (2) 	(1) m'khaqt B285 (2) ahtit (neck, throat, windpipe) B77a	kaat/kaat-it, mookto (Soy Keiyo) ⁸³	1
80. breast	(1) κοϣπ(τ)  (2) 	(1) kun(t) ⁸⁴ (2) qenu B773b	kiina/kineet	1

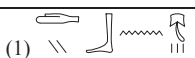
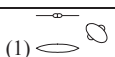
⁷⁹ B 416a.  | nu ra “dribble at the mouth,” B 351b, is Kalenjiin *nyoror*. This, together with *rorii* “laugh” and *le* “utter,” seem to strongly suggest that the Kalenjiin lost a word for “mouth” whose root was “ro.” It is common to interchange /l/ with /r/ sound. The Bantu-speaking Gikuyu seem to have assimilated this word because to “keep quiet” in Gikuyu is *kira*, which is favourably comparable to Coptic κ& ρω *ka ro* “keep silent,” “leave mouth”—Crum, 288b. It is not unusual to find words that are cognate between Gikuyu, or any other central and eastern Kenya Bantu-speaking group, and Kalenjiin and, by extension, ancient Egyptian. One such word is *me-giro* “taboo” Kalenjiin *kir* or *ker* “close,” “embargo,” “ban” by declaring something to be taboo, usually for a period. This is to be compared with Coptic ϣϣ ρω (*giroo*) “deprive,” “prevent”—Crum, 288.

⁸⁰ The three Kalenjiin versions have to be read together with the respective Coptic and ancient Egyptian versions to determine that the root here is *-le-*, *-ne-* or *-la-* from which the same languages obtained their root for “utter” *le*—a major function of the tongue.

⁸¹ Distefano, 1985:272.

⁸² Distefano, 1985:272.

⁸³ Distefano, 1985:269.

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
81. heart	ⲁⲉⲧ	het (also mind)	muguulel	
82. liver		maesu-t B273b	Koow-et	
83. blood	(1) ⲛⲣⲱⲧ (2) ⲥⲛⲟⲩ/ⲥⲛⲟⲩⲩ	(1) khrooti (jugular vein) C631b (2) snof/snuf C348	(1) koroti (blood) (2) sun-eet (menstruation)	$\frac{2}{3}$
84. name	(1) ⲣⲁⲛ/ⲣⲉⲛ (2) ⲛⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ	(1) ran/ren (2) pekran (thy namesake)	(1) karna (2) paa-karna (namesake)	$\frac{2}{3}$
85. stone	(1) ⲭⲁⲭⲱ, ⲕⲟⲛ ⲛⲱⲧ (2) 	(1) gagoo, koh nshoot (2) qeh (kind of stone, flint) B777b	koi	1
86. animal	(1)  (2) ⲧⲁⲛⲟⲟⲩⲩ	(1) tibnu B868b (2) tbnoue B868b	tiony	$\frac{1}{3}$
87. root	(1) ⲁⲣⲛⲭ/ⲛⲟⲩⲛⲉ (2) 	(1) ariig/nune C227b (2) menit (roots, stalks, stems) B299a	(1) ereen (Northern Kalenjiin) ⁸⁵ , tigiit-yoot (2) minuut (planted things, miin=plant v.)	$\frac{1}{3}$
88. seed	(1)  (2) ⲭⲛⲛⲥⲓⲧⲉ	(1) keshu B798a ⁸⁶ (2) gin-site (sowing of seeds) C361b (site = seeds)	keswo/kesuy/keswoot	1
89. skin	(1)  (2)  (3) 	(1) ser (skin, a disease) ⁸⁷ B610b (2) meska B327a (3) khaut (skins, hides) B571a	(1) siir/siira (Pokoot and other Northern Kalenjiin) ⁸⁸ (2) magata	1

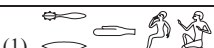
⁸⁴ Lambdin, 1983:229.

⁸⁵ This is in the dialects of Tot, Cherangany, Chesegon Soi, and Pokoot sections as given by Distefano, 1985:271. Distefano also gives *ereen* as the probable “proto” word. This happens to be the word nearest to the Coptic ⲁⲣⲛⲭ (*ariig*). *Tigiit-yoot*, however, is the more common word for “root” among other Kalenjiin sections.

⁸⁶ Seeds of plants like gourds, watermelons, pumpkins, etc. are called in Kalenjiin *tender-EEK* and this corresponds to ancient Egyptian  *tchernit* (or *dernit*) “a kind of seed or grain”—B 910b.

⁸⁷ This probably refers to skin rashes, *sir* v. in Kalenjiin. Small pox in Kalenjiin is *chee-sir-u*. This *sir* and the word for “skin” *siir* (pl. *siir-ek*) suggest that the ancient Egyptian , should correctly be transcribed *sir* or *siir*.

⁸⁸ Distefano, 1985:271. *Siir* to the Kipsigiis and the other Central Kalenjiin speakers refers to animal skins with hair that are worn hanging from the neck and falling on the back of the wearer. An important example is the colobus monkey skin. Leopard skin is also popular.

English	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Transliteration	Kalenjiin	Score
90. child	 (1)  (2)  (3)  (4) 	(1) chrd F204 (2) sheere (3) msw ⁸⁹ (4) aluu, pkeket C101	(1) cherereet (a baby) (2) cherere (baby) (3) mooso (in Keiyo and other Northern) ⁹⁰ (4) laakwa/lakweet, kipleekwa (baby) ⁹¹	1
		Total full scores out of 90 = 54 Total $\frac{2}{3}$ scores = 14 = 9 Total $\frac{1}{3}$ scores = 9 = 3 Total cognition Total no-score = 13 Total cognition, Kal./anc. Egyptian on basic words score sheet is therefore: 86%	60% 16% 10% 86% 14%	

Word Arrangement by Semantic Domain

A comparative linguistics exercise such as this chapter attempts could invite the risk of the accusation that one capitalised on some cases of fortuitous coincidence to conveniently arrive at the conclusion that the languages being compared were genetically related. One means of avoiding this is to draw up a list of words in groups of belonging, e.g., to list in one group a number of names for body parts and call that group the domain of body parts. Another grouping would be of items relating to, say, body posture and movement such as “sit,” “stand,” “run” and “fall down.” It cannot possibly be sheer coincidence that two languages have identical words for many of such body postures and movements.

In this exercise, we seek to meet the standard set by linguists as expressed by Bennett (1998:35) as we read in Chapter 5: namely that it is desirable in a comparative linguistics engagement such as this to include vocabulary from a

⁸⁹ Gardiner, 1927:443.

⁹⁰ *Mooso* now refers to “baboon” more often—except among the Keiyo and others up north who use both the common *laakwa* and *mooso*. But the true name for “baboon” may have originally been *yegen* as retained in the name *Kip-yegen* “of the baboon family.” The Maasai call “baboon” *o-yegeny*, lending force to this argument. A tiny species of ape goes by the same Kalenjiin word for “a baby,” *cherereet*, and it makes logical sense that that being the case, the larger species ought to correspond to “child.” Animals, especially those that have been chosen for clan emblems (totems) are bound to be given euphemistic names. The commonly heard moral among the Kalenjiin that apes resulted from children who were cursed for misbehaving also helps to strengthen this argument.

⁹¹ *Kipleekwa* as Kalenjiin (Nandi) for “baby” is from Hollis (1909). However this word more often, in present day parlance, refers to the hare or rabbit. According to Hollis’ (1909) “English-Nandi Vocabulary” section, the Nandi then called a baby *kipleekwa* while they called the rabbit or hare—as they still do—*kipleengwa*. As for the Coptic *aluu* and *pkeket*, it is possible to see how a combination of the two leads to the Kalenjiin *lakweet* “child.”

variety of semantic domains, or semantic fields, and that linguists generally restrict cognateness to items whose similarity in form and meaning is too great to ascribe to chance and where borrowing and onomatopoeia can be ruled out, and that regularity of correspondence, which is quantifiable, is an important factor (Bennet, 1998:28). The requirement of regularity-of-correspondence is assured by the methodical arrangement of words into groups that convey meanings within the same general area, i.e. according to semantic domain.

The 100+ incidences of word sharing demonstrated in (Table 2) have been arranged in such a way as to preclude any charges of fortuitous coincidence. Each group of the vocabulary items, or lexemes, employed here, has a common range of meaning, which constitutes a semantic domain. Such a domain is characterised by the distinctive semantic features (components) that differentiate individual lexemes in the domain from one another, and is also characterised by features shared by all the lexemes in the domain. The grouping of lexemes in semantic domains, as we have described, has the advantage of helping eliminate any charge of coincidence in relation to any pair of lexemes. Any such charge is immediately and automatically dismissed by the mere presence of other cognate pairs within the same domain. If, for example, a critic should charge that the pair of cognates of ancient Egyptian-Kalenjiin word for “hair,” *sma* and *suumei*, owes it to a fortuitous coincidence, he or she would be hard put to explain how come the words for other major body parts like “head/skull,” “hand,” “nose,” “breast,” etc. all the way down to “nail/claw,” also bear resemblance, thanks to sheer chance!

The major dictionaries that were consulted in the compilation of the cognate word list were:

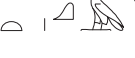
1. Budge, Sir E.A.Wallis, 1920. *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*. (First published 1920 by John Murray, London) Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1978. Abbreviation used here: “B.Dict.”
2. Faulkner, Raymond O., 1962. *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. Griffith Institute, Oxford. Abbreviation used here: “F.Dict.”
3. Gardiner, Sir Alan, 1927. *Egyptian Grammar, Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*. Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (first published, 1927).
4. Crum, W.E., 1939. *A Coptic Dictionary*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press.
5. *Kalenjin Dictionary*, C.C. Ng’elechei. Transafrica Publishers, 1979; Hollis A.C., 1909, *The Nandi Language and Folklore*, Oxford at The Clarendon Press; Distefano, John Albert, 1985, *The Precolonial History of the Kalenjin of Kenya: A Methodological Comparison of Linguistic and Oral Traditional Evidence*, UMI Dissertation Services, Michigan, USA and many miscellaneous Coptic Church documents and sermons.

Table 2: Word arrangement by semantic domain

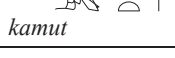
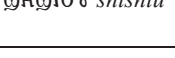
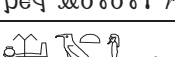
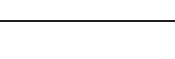
Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Meaning	Kalenjiin	Meaning
Important Close Family Words			
1. $\pi\Delta\iota\omega\tau$ <i>paiyoot</i>	my father/elder/God	<i>Paiyoot/poiyoot</i>	father, elder
2. $\alpha\eta\theta\omicron\tau$ <i>miuu</i>	mother	<i>iyoo</i>	mother
3.  <i>qemam-t</i>	mother, parent	<i>kam-eet</i>	his/her mother
4.  <i>chrd</i>	child	<i>cherer-eet</i>	baby
5. $\varpi\epsilon\epsilon\rho\epsilon$ <i>sheere</i>	son, child	<i>cherer-eet</i>	baby of human
6. $\Delta\lambda\omicron\tau\omicron\tau$ <i>aluu</i>	child	<i>laakwa/ lakweet</i>	a/the child
7. $\pi\kappa\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\tau$ <i>pkeket</i>	child	<i>lakweet</i>	child
8.  <i>m'hau-t</i>	kin, family	<i>maat</i>	wider family
Independent Pronouns			
9. $\Delta\pi\omicron\kappa$ <i>anok</i>	I, me	<i>anee kwoo</i>	I am...
10. $\Delta\pi$ <i>an</i>	I	<i>-an</i>	me
11. $\Delta\tau\tau$ <i>ang</i>	I, myself	<i>an-ee</i>	myself
12.  <i>un</i> ⁹²	you	<i>inyee (in-nyee)</i>	you
13. $\pi\tau\omicron\kappa$ <i>intok</i>	you (are)	<i>ok-week</i>	yourselves
14. $\epsilon\kappa$ <i>ek</i>	you	<i>ok-week</i>	yourselves
 <i>ntth</i>	you(fem.)	<i>in-yeentet</i>	yourself
The Genitive			
16. $\omega\pi/\Delta\pi$ <i>oop/ap</i>	“belongs to,” “of”	<i>oop/aap</i>	“belongs to,” “of”
17.  <i>nebw</i>	lord/owner of...	<i>nebo, nebou</i>	owner of..., the ruler of...

⁹² B164a.

Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Meaning	Kalenjiin	Meaning
18.  <i>nen</i>	our/s	<i>(ne-)nyoon</i>	our/s
19.  <i>naaon?</i>	our	<i>(ne)nyoon</i>	it is ours
20.  <i>inte</i>	possessive prep. of...	<i>tiny-e/tin-too</i>	he/she has...
21.  <i>naat</i>	those who...	<i>noot/nooto/net</i>	it is the one/the very one!
22.  <i>khen/ hen</i>	in, e.g. in the name of...	<i>een</i>	in, e.g. in the name of
Important Celestial and Terrestrial Words			
23.  As-t	Goddess Isis	<i>Asiis/asiista</i>	sole God(dess)/t he sun
24.  <i>neter</i>	divinity, deity	<i>netoroor</i>	the exalted, now God/Jesus
25.  Maat	divinity of ethics	<i>maat</i>	ethically binding relations
26.  Ptah	Lord/"god" of Memphis	<i>Ptaa-iyaa</i>	"the Lord," now Jesus/God
27.  <i>paut ta,</i>	of the beginning	<i>po taa</i>	of the beginning
28.  <i>Ri/Ra</i>	"Sun God" Ra	<i>ra</i>	today
29.  <i>hru-pni</i>	today/this day	<i>ra-uni</i>	today/this day
30.  <i>Rnnwt</i>	serpentine goddess	<i>ereen-et</i>	a serpent
31.  <i>Ka Kamur,</i>	Bull-God of Kamur	<i>kamar</i>	ritually/emotionally important bull with artificially deformed horns
32.  <i>Set/Sutekh,</i>	dog-headed evil "god"	<i>ses-eet/segii</i>	a dog/dog, or jackal-totem family
33.  <i>kemet</i>	country, Egypt	<i>em-eet</i>	country, nation

Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Meaning	Kalenjiin	Meaning
34.  <i>kah</i>	land, earth, country	<i>kaa</i>	home, homeland, place
35.  <i>Ha ka Ptah,</i>	Ptah's shrine	<i>Kaa-Ki-ptaa (iyaat)</i>	Lord's place
36.  <i>kora</i>	country (Greek?)	<i>koor-a</i>	country
37.  <i>hoone</i>	canal	<i>oino/oin-eet</i>	river
38.  <i>an-t</i>	watercourse, valley	<i>ain-eet</i>	river
39.  <i>tol</i>	heap, hillock	<i>tul-, tul-wa</i>	mountain, hill
40.  Copt.  <i>tu</i>	hill, mountain	<i>tul-</i>	mountain, hill
41.  <i>qeh</i>	a kind of stone, flint	<i>koi</i>	stone, also hill, mountain
42.  <i>kht</i>	tree, wood	<i>keet</i>	tree
43.  <i>kht koi</i>	tall tree	<i>keet kooi</i>	tall tree (usu. <i>keet ne kooi</i>)
44.  <i>errit</i>	door, gate, judge hall	<i>or-eet/ar-eet</i>	a road, a path, entrance
 <i>her-t</i>	way, path, road	<i>or-eet</i>	as above
Kingship Words			
46.  <i>koot</i>	house	<i>koot</i>	a house
47.  <i>pr-o</i>	great house	<i>poror</i>	the larger house of family descent ⁹³

⁹³ For example: *Poror-yeet aap* Chepkeendi, i.e., Kaap-Chepkeendi, the descendants of the House of a historical lady called Chepkeendi or Tapkeendi. Before being trans-located by the colonial government from 1905, they occupied a territory contiguous between the Nandi and the Kipsigiis in South Nandi/North Kipsigiis. They now form a large clan/section of the Nandi to the north of Nandi County, where they were resettled. Many members of that House constitute a large section of the population of North Kipsigiis. Most Kalenjiin sub-nations north of Kipsigiis are divided into *Poror-yoosyek* (Great Houses) socio-political sections in accordance with family descent. The Kipsigiis are unique in that they are divided instead into hereditary military regiments (also with the connotation of “Houses”) styled *Por-yoosyek*. *Por*, therefore, is the root of the word, originally meaning “house,” (in the sense of lineage) while *-oor*, or *woor* is the old word for “great,” still used as such in North Kalenjiin. So *por-oor/por-woor*, or *por-yo-oor/por-yo-woor*, “great house” contracted over time to *poror*. This may also help explain the word *pharaoh*, also meaning “great house.”

Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Meaning	Kalenjiin	Meaning
48.  <i>uuro</i>	king	<i>oorgoi</i>	royalty
49.  <i>ur-qahu</i>	chief of district	<i>oorgoi-yoot</i>	the ruler/king
50.  <i>wr hk-w</i>	great of magic	<i>Oorgoiyoot</i>	King (the chief physician)
Vital Life and Death Words			
51.  <i>aam</i>	to swallow, to eat	<i>am</i>	eat
52.  <i>uoam</i>	eat	<i>am</i>	eat
53.  <i>am'it</i>	flesh, food	<i>amit/am-dit</i>	food
54.  <i>msyt</i>	evening meal	<i>amisyeet</i>	eating, a meal
55.  <i>kamut</i>	wheaten bread	<i>kimy-eet</i>	cooked flour meal
56.  <i>shishiu</i>	conceive, desire, yearn for	<i>sich</i>	give birth to, achieve
57.  <i>iwr</i>	conceive	<i>ri</i>	conceive (of livestock only)
58.  <i>hi</i>	give birth	<i>yi</i>	give birth
59.  <i>miio</i>	be hale	<i>miee</i>	be hale, good
60.  <i>men</i>	be sick, etc.	<i>mian</i>	be sick
61.  <i>men't</i>	pain, sickness	<i>myaneet/ miondo</i>	sickness
62.  <i>muut</i>	kill	<i>muut</i>	strike viciously, smite
63.  <i>met</i>	death	<i>meet, myat</i>	death, calamity, evil
64.  <i>mu</i>	death	<i>me</i>	die
65.  <i>ref-muut</i>	dead body	<i>muusto</i>	a dead body
66.  <i>ma'at</i>	dead body, mummy	<i>meet, myat</i>	death, calamity

Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Meaning	Kalenjiin	Meaning
Some Major-body-part Words			
67.  <i>sma</i>	hair	<i>suumei</i>	hair
68.  <i>moti</i>	skull	<i>met</i>	head
69.  <i>e</i>	hand	<i>ei, e-uut</i>	hand, a/the hand
70.  <i>ti-gig</i>	hand	<i>tigig</i>	shoulder
71.  <i>sher-t</i>	nose, nostril	<i>ser-uut</i>	the nose
72.  <i>kuun</i>	bosom, breast	<i>kiina</i>	breast
73.  <i>ahtit</i>	neck, throat, windpipe	<i>kaat-it</i>	neck
74.  <i>aten</i>	ear	<i>iit, iit-in</i>	ear, ears
75.  <i>maht</i>	bowels, intestines	<i>mo-eet</i>	stomach/bowels, intestines
76.  <i>soi</i>	back of man or beast	<i>sua, sweet</i>	loins, waist, the waist
77.  <i>kehte</i>	loin, hip	<i>kweet</i>	buttock
78.  <i>kt</i>	vulva, vagina	<i>kweet</i>	vagina, esp. in Marakwet
79.  <i>m'th</i>	phallus (penis)	<i>monyis-eet</i>	the phallus
80.  <i>seet</i>	phallus	<i>monyis-eet</i>	the phallus
81.  <i>qefen-t</i>	vulva, vagina	<i>kapin-yeet</i>	the clitoris
82.  <i>khps</i>	foreleg, thigh	<i>kupees</i>	thigh
83.  <i>keli</i> (+Grk)	knee	<i>keel, keel-do</i>	leg, a leg
84.  <i>ker</i>	haunch, thigh	<i>kereeng'</i>	foot, leg
85.  <i>sha-t</i>	claw	<i>siiy-eet</i>	a claw, a nail
Some Important Verbs			
86.  <i>chogi</i>	run	<i>choog</i>	to hurry hither
87.  <i>khakh/ chakh</i>	be speedy, swift, hasten	<i>chaak-ta</i>	make haste, hurry

Ancient Egyptian/Coptic	Meaning	Kalenjiin	Meaning
88.  <i>poat</i>	run	<i>laapat</i>	run
89.  <i>ui</i>	go	<i>ui</i>	go
90.  <i>ser</i>	to write	<i>sir</i>	write
91.  <i>sikh/sih</i>	write	<i>sir</i>	write
92.  <i>soun</i>	look at	<i>soeen</i>	look at
93.  <i>ioorh</i>	look, behold	<i>iroo</i>	look, behold
94.  <i>ger</i>	examine, study	<i>keer</i>	have a look at
95.  <i>noei</i>	know	<i>nai</i>	know
96.  <i>martiria</i>	witness, testimony	<i>matir-yoot</i>	ritual/formal witness
97.  <i>mtr</i>	instruct	<i>motir</i>	instruct; initiate
Important Feelings			
98.  <i>amoi, miio</i>	good	<i>miee</i>	good, it is good
98.  <i>qerrm</i>	pleasure (?)	<i>karram</i> (North Kalenjiin)	it is nice/beautiful
99.  <i>sharm'</i>	to be peaceful	<i>chaam-yo</i>	peace, love
100.  <i>sharm</i>	to greet, to salute	<i>chame-kee</i>	Kalenjiin standard greeting
101.  <i>emashoo</i>	much, greatly	<i>miising'</i>	very much, very well
102.  <i>merit</i>	love	<i>murer-eet</i>	the beloved/brid ⁹⁴
103.  <i>merut</i>	beloved woman	<i>murer-eet</i>	the beloved/bride

Huntingford's Egypto-Kalenjiin Comparative Attempt, 1926

The glamour of ancient Egypt, both in relation to its contemporaries and for all time, was, and is, so overwhelming that it would not be surprising to find that many would expect various communities to want to wallow in that glamour. Such

⁹⁴ A newly wed woman remains *murereet*, i.e. technically a bride, until her first childbirth from which time she will be called *kwoondo* "wife."

hypothetical pretentious communities would, given the wildest scenario of possibilities, conceivably do so, among other ways, by inventing a history that forces their origin back to that great civilisation. It is of course not possible for a whole community to tell a lie, let alone tell it so consistently in time and space. But because there exists, if remotely, a human tendency to want to associate themselves with a greater past, listeners justifiably treat such claims with an understandable amount of skepticism, especially when the claim comes from the community involved or from one of their own members. A claim to the same effect by an outsider who is purely in pursuit of knowledge that the history of a certain community was genetically linked to that of ancient Egypt, would not be received with a similar amount of skepticism for he or she would be presumed to harbour neither group nor personal interest in historical confirmation to that effect.

Cognisant of this twin human psychological condition—the tendency to want to associate oneself with a greater, more glorious past, and the resultant tendency to view with suspicion anyone who claims such history—the author found the works of pioneering European researchers that linked the Kalenjin to ancient Egypt important to cite here as objective support from disinterested, if not, indeed, hostile parties. It is also important to note that the debate surrounding the origin of the Kalenjin at the turn of the century was confined to the elite circle of sophisticated European scholars and that the Kalenjin themselves were not only non-party to the debate but they were also unaware of it! They certainly were unaware, at the material time, of the fact that they were the subject of a high-level intellectual controversy of international scope. The views of one or two of the protagonists in this debate were covered in Chapter 2, in relation to the work of the German anthropologist, Merker. We saw in that chapter that Merker had asserted, around 1904, without so much as batting an eyelid, that the Tutoog of Tanzania (the Kalenjin subgroup he studied) were, in the main, true representatives of the ancient Egyptian people whom he called Semites (Merker 1904 Ch. 1) thus starting the debate.

But perhaps we should take note here: after accusing the European Africanist of being more preoccupied with establishing a sort of abstract historical truth, and suggesting that the Africans should be indifferent to such works, the great African master, Cheikh Anta Diop, says: “In this connection, let us say in passing that only works done by Germans seem capable of attracting the attention of future Africans because of their seriousness and the great speculative interest they provoke” (1996:44).

Among the European scholars that later entered the fray, during early colonial East Africa, was Huntingford. Huntingford was probably the first western writer to put down on published paper, for the purpose of comparison, words that were common between the ancient Egyptian and the Kalenjin languages, which he did in 1926.

In a 1926 issue of the journal *Ancient Egypt*,⁹⁵ Huntingford states: “Now, it is sometimes said that the Nandi (read Kalenjin) and Maasai are descended from

⁹⁵ October 1926, Part 1 page 10.

ancient Egyptians.” He goes on to say that the view was incorrect, that instead, the Kalenjiin and the Maasai shared common ancestors with the ancient Egyptians through an intermediary race, the Galla (correctly called Oromo).

In 1953, twenty-seven years later, however, the same Mr. Huntingford, having probably had the chance to do some homework, did excuse the Kalenjiin from Cushitic Oromo part-ancestry. He proposed that by the time the south-bound Kalenjiin and kin passed through the present Oromo (Galla) country in Central western Ethiopia, the Oromo had not yet reached that part of the world (Huntingford 1953a:10). Here he concedes that the Kalenjiin indeed came from further north of Ethiopian Oromo country, thus leaving Egypt the only logical conclusion—especially when his later concession is read together with his 1926 Egypto-Kalenjiin word list.

However, Huntingford, once he had so excused the Kalenjiin from Oromo part-ancestry, did not address himself to the largely unexplained phenomenon whereby Kalenjiin and the Cushitic languages—such as Oromo and Somali—have a great number of words in common. Neither did he completely retract the then entrenched western view, a view he had shared earlier, going by his writings, that the Kalenjiin and kin were a hybrid product of the Cushites and the Nilotic people.

Fixed in the mind of the anthropologist, before, during, and long after Huntingford’s time, was the assumption that the Kalenjiin and kin could not have been primordial stock in their own right. That they had to be the hybrid of others because, to them, these people (the Kalenjiin and kin) did not quite resemble any one of the existing “primary races” of East Africa in particular. They, instead, appeared to them to be a cross between the groups that they had classified as Bantus, Hamites, Cushites, Nilotes, and Negroes. “I append, with much hesitation,” he writes, “a short list of Egyptian and Nandi words which, it is just possible, may be akin. The resemblance in some cases is very striking, and it seems worth while to put the list on record.” Huntingford’s list is here faithfully reproduced as Table 3.

It is evident from the foregoing that Huntingford seemed to think it prudent to distance the Kalenjiin from their apparent heritage at the time even as linguistic evidence discovered by none other than himself, which contradicted his theory, stared him in the face. The urgency might have been made all the more pressing following the emphatic work of the said German scholar, Merker.

Table 3: Huntingford's list of Kalenjin-Ancient Egyptian Cognate words, 1926

Egyptian	Meaning	Nandi	Meaning
	eat	<i>am</i>	eat
	ox	<i>ei</i> (Suk egh)	bullock
	hand	<i>e</i>	hand
	great (of age)	<i>oo</i>	great
	march	U	move
	cut	KES	cut
	arrive (that which is arrived at)	<i>in paipai</i>	rejoice/joy
	sky	<i>pet</i>	day/daylight
	abide	<i>meny</i>	live in a house
	be ill	<i>mian</i>	be ill
	mistake	<i>ng'em</i>	destroy
	flee	<i>rua</i>	rush
	place	<i>ka</i>	house
	timber	<i>ket</i>	tree
	retreat	KET	go back
	write	<i>sir</i>	daub/write
	nose	<i>ser</i>	nose
	love	<i>murer</i>	(girl) lover/bride

Signed: G.W.B. HUNTINGFORD (1926)

CHAPTER 7

Ancient Egyptian-Kalenjiin Syntactic Analysis

The foregoing discussion under Chapter 6 constituted a detailed effort to try and provide proof, by use of the lexical (vocabulary) comparative method, that the ancient Egyptian language (including its Coptic stage) on the one hand, and the Kalenjiin language on the other, were one and the same language in the distant past. That whole effort aimed to prove that many of the hard-to-borrow, or to lend, basic or inherited vocabulary items and many other cultural words, were shared by the languages or, for that matter, language stages being compared. Now it is time we set out to investigate the extent of cognateness with respect to the grammars, or syntactic structures, of those respective languages or language stages.

The grammatical discussion is necessary because a language comparative study is not complete until a thing or two is said about the basic grammatical rules that govern the languages whose vocabulary items and other aspects seem a priori.

In going about the grammatical comparative exercise, we will rely on the work of earlier scholars of Egyptology, most of them being of western origin. Coming from the rich West, and being therefore less encumbered by immediate basic material want, they had the time and resources to carry out prolonged, detailed, and expensive research. But they also had a handicap in that being foreigners to Africa meant studying an extinct African people's language without the benefit of the intimate knowledge of any of the living neighbouring African languages that may be related to ancient Egyptian. The incidence of geographical proximity alone should have hinted that those neighbouring African languages that were alive had to be related to the extinct language. An a priori examination should have raised suspicion that those languages almost certainly descended from one common language along with the extinct ancient Egyptian if not actually descended from the latter. This should have immediately prompted serious comparative linguistics work. Yet, they generally treated the ancient Egyptian language as if it was an isolated alien innovation that had dropped in a perpendicular manner from the sky and subsequently died intestate on the same spot thousands of years later.

In this respect, an African philosophical mind found it necessary to point out as follows:

- “(1) The comparative method shows that a language is rarely isolated in time and space, that is to say, that it is rare to come across a language which does not belong to a more or less large community, family or group, that

is not more or less ancient. (2) This belonging of a language to a family is interpreted by profound similarities which are not fortuitous, nor acquired by borrowing words. They must be correspondences, similarities, resemblances which rest upon basic and inherited facts” (Obenga 1992:117–118).

This thought is not unique to Obenga. He is echoing others and his second point will be found to be more or less identical to that of some western scholars who have stated as follows:

- (1) “The comparative method relies on the assumption of regular sound correspondences between related languages. Languages are said to be related if their sounds correspond regularly in morphemes having similar or identical meanings (sound itself is not enough).” (2) “The genealogical model requires that a language cannot have more than one parent language. This implies that if language A is related to language B, and B is related to C, then A must also be related to C” (Distefano, 1985:63. Also Cf. Katičić, 1970:7).
- (3) “Members of a language family have a historical connection with one another and descend in common from a single ancestor” (MEE 98/9).

A comparative linguistics study of the ancient Egyptian language and the living neighbouring languages by those early scholars would, therefore, have brought up the obvious similarities and, going by the linguistics rules of thumb that are articulated in points two and three above, they would have ended up with an inevitable conclusion. This conclusion is that because the genealogical model dictates that no language can have more than one ancestor language, genetically related languages have necessarily a historical connection and descend from a single ancestor, that the other genetically related African languages that surrounded ancient Egyptians were descended from a single ancestor with the latter, and that there could have been no two ways about it.

If those tireless western Egyptologists had tried to use the living genetically related African languages to enhance their work, Egyptological knowledge would be far more advanced and more certain than it is today. However, it is not too late and the neighbouring African languages continue to be an important potential stepping-stone. Their study, alongside ancient Egyptian language could still profoundly enhance knowledge of the extinct Egyptian language and thereby reveal the hidden treasure trove by the facilitation of more accurate decipherment of literary resources and other forms of ancient knowledge that now lie well outside our comprehension.

The author, being an African native speaker of a language that exhibits a tremendous extent of parallelism with ancient Egyptian language, and being at the same time in a position to benefit from the tireless linguistic work of the said Egyptologists, found himself in a position closer to the ideal. From that position of vantage, he was bound to come up with findings that conformed in certain respects with the earlier studies. But being in possession of an additional tool, he would come up with many facts that had not come to light so far. Certain findings that

were at variance with those of the early Egyptologists were bound to come up too. In the field of linguistics, this was not to be unexpected as one expert concedes:

“Despite the zeal and persuasiveness of certain linguistic theoreticians, almost ‘charismatic’ in their approach, there are few if any categorical or indisputable ‘truths’ in linguistic doctrine” (Ornstein 1987:ix).

The author, subsequent to a critical study of ancient Egyptian as documented by renowned masters of this field, and especially with an obstinate single-minded application of the said native Kalenjin language, has come to respect the foregoing statement a great deal. Findings that in many respects contradict certain theories held dear by the early masters and bring yet unknown facts to light, are an attestation to Ornstein’s statement, and are to be found in ample quantity in the following pages.

In order to prove that a genetic linkage exists between the living Kalenjin language and the long dead ancient Egyptian language, the exercise must be completely scientific and must demonstrate “regular similarities, defined by correspondences between complete forms, morphemes, and phonemes,” (Benveniste 1966—Obenga, 1992:101).

The philosophical grounding having been expounded to the extent we have and the standard of proof reaffirmed in the preceding sentence, we may now launch into a comparative analysis of the two languages. But first, a word or two about linguistic classification.

Ancient Egyptian and its latter stage, known as Coptic, comprise an assortment of virtually dead dialects that the Pharaohs spoke. *Pharaonic* is considered by linguists to be the very definition of the Hamitic family of African languages. In this section, we will demonstrate that the Kalenjin language is a member of the said Hamitic family of languages.

It was acknowledged in Chapter 2 that western linguists and historians, supported by certain quarters of the African intelligentsia, had of late, discouraged the continued use of the terms “Hamite” and “Hamitic” (Cf. Davidson 1989:47, Nyombe, 2007:37). Not much is said by such critics about the classification of the closely related languages that are spoken by the people whose older ethnic designation has been so vehemently protested. However, modern literature generally prefers for the Kalenjin, Maasai, Teso, Turkana, Karimojong, Bari, and Lotuko type of languages, classifications such as Para-Nilotic, Southern Nilotic, Nilo-Saharan, etc. But it may be remembered that Kalenjin, and the related languages, had been classified under “Nilo-Hamitic” by the older western scholars (Cf. Tucker & Bryan 1966:443).

It is also very important to note, once again, that virtually all the alternative classificatory names that this sub-Saharan group of languages has been assigned invariably contain the inevitable qualification: *NILO*. Of this adjective everybody

apparently agreed that the people and the languages being designated and re-designated, basically originate from the Nile Basin.

On its part, the ancient Egyptian speech has often been classified under a controversial linguistic grouping called “Afro-Asiatic,” but for no sound reason technically. It is not genetically related to any Asian language. On the other hand, it is most intimately and genetically related to fellow African languages, notably—though not exclusively—to those of the type now classified under “Nilo-Saharan” and the other language groups that bear the prefix Nilo-. Happily, though, the trend now in western linguistic circles is to discard the term “Afro-Asiatic” (Cf. Tucker & Bryan 1966:2). It finds no supporters in much of Africa and must be on its way out.

That said, however, it may be pointed out that the Afro-Asiatic linguistic notion is not entirely devoid of a territorial African reality. There are, indeed, a few languages in sub-Saharan Africa that would fit well into an Afro-Asiatic kind of mold whatever name one gave such a grouping. While discussing such coining of names, however, we need to keep in mind one linguistic standard that dictates as follows:

“the genealogical model requires that a language cannot have more than one parent language” (Distefano, 1985:63).

These so-called Afro-Asiatic languages are, therefore, either African or Asian in origin, but not both if we were to go by the above-quoted standard of the genealogical model. They are, however, certainly Afro-Asiatic, not in the “hybrid” sense intended by the inventors of the term, but in the sense that this family of languages is spoken both in western Asia (or the Middle East) and in Africa. These are Amharic, Tigre, Tigrinya, Harari, Gurage, and other languages of Ethiopia and Eritrea that are clearly Semitic in structure and basic lexicon but are culturally influenced by the African experience.⁹⁶

In our present undertaking, we first need to prove that the way in which the words, which are shared as demonstrated under Chapter 6, are arranged in order to build up sentences, i.e. word order, is the same for both languages. For if the basic vocabulary stock is similar and the way the words are arranged in order to make a meaningful grammatically correct sentence, is similar, then we must be talking about: (1) the same language or (2) different phases of the same language.

Word Order

The study of word order is central to syntactic (or grammatical) analysis. The genetic relationship—or the absence of such relationship—between one language and another, may be further proved by comparing the natural word order or

⁹⁶ Such languages have been re-baptised ERYTHRAIC, from which grouping ancient Egyptian has been duly excluded—A.N. Tucker and M.A. Bryan, 1966:2. The *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* 1998, dictionary cautions that the term “Asiatic” is derogatory and, so one would think logically, the compound term “Afro-Asiatic” must be similarly derogatory.

sentence structure as employed respectively by the two languages whose historical, or present relationship is being investigated. Although word order analysis may be central to syntactic analysis, it is not enough on its own and our work must take cognisance of and take the following “caution” into consideration: “Even though two languages form words or organise sentence elements in the same way, they are not necessarily related to each other...” (Cf. MEE 98/9). What this cautionary statement implies is that a listing of languages according to a typological characteristic such as word order may cluster languages together that are, by all other measures, unrelated and nothing by way of affinity may be read into such relationship.

Hamitic languages, such as ancient Egyptian, Coptic, Kalenjin, Maa(sai), and Teso, unlike English, Kiswahili, and perhaps any other non-Hamitic language from the Eastern Africa region that one could think of; begin the *verbal* sentence with a *verb* (Cf. Tucker & Bryan, 1966 various).

But, as already said, during the following discussion, we shall keep the above caution regarding typology in mind and continue to provide, in addition, examples of other concordant relationships. These should, by their very nature and predictability, only point to historical membership of one family according to the experts’ own definitions that were outlined in Chapter 5. After that, it will have been proven as a matter of inevitability that the shared word-order characteristic was no typological coincidence but that it only provided further proof of genetic relationship.

The word-order characteristics of languages is so important for the purpose of categorising languages into families and as litmus indicators to linguists that further investigation of other shared phenomena should be instituted. The leading lights in the linguistics discipline have recognised as much:

“In the Language Universals Project at Stanford University, for example, the American linguist Joseph Greenberg and his colleagues have shown that languages that share a basic word order (such as subject-verb-object or object-verb-subject or object-subject-verb) also share other features of structure” (MEE 98/10).

If languages share other features of structure, on top of word order affinity, then they are necessarily members of one family.

Ancient Egyptian (Gardiner 1927:14) and Coptic basic word order for a verbal sentence is **Verb-Subject-Object** (VSO) although Coptic fails the test occasionally, probably owing to the massive contamination by Greek. The important VSO characteristic is also typical of the Kalenjin language (Tucker & Bryan 1966:19 & 541). The occasional variation of this basic Hamitic structure is **Verb-Object-Subject** (VOS) —but the verb has to come first in either case.

In contrast, the word order for the Kiswahili language (representing the Bantu family) as well as for the English language, for a similar verbal sentence, is as

follows: **Subject-Verb-Object (SVO)**. But English and Kiswahili, on further investigation, exhibit little else in common by way of features of structure. They do not, therefore, belong to one family. Many languages share the SVO word order characteristic, this being only a typological classification, but they do not necessarily all belong to the same family.

One other important distinguishing phenomenon is the relative confinement to a given geographical area of the VSO-characterised languages. This should weaken the suspicion of a fortuitous coincidence such as is demonstrated by the word-order characteristic shared between Kiswahili and English, two languages that are geographically far apart.

In contrast, geography supports the observation that old Semitic was a VSO language. It has been documented that ancient Semitic languages also shared this VSO syntactic order but that two of the important living branches of Semitic, Hebrew and Arabic, have since acquired the habit of SVO syntactic order. It is also on record that the living African branches of Semitic, namely, those of Ethiopia (Tigre, Tigrinya, Amharic, Harari, and Gurage) have since acquired the SOV syntactic format probably under the influence of the Cushitic adstratum (Loprieno 1995:3). But the Chadic family of about 140 languages and dialects spoken by more than thirty million speakers in sub-Saharan Africa—in the general proximity of Lake Chad—is one of the language families listed under the (controversial) Afroasiatic group whose family's unmarked word order is, like in modern Semitic, SVO (Loprieno 1995:5).

All these former VSO languages have something in common with the typically VSO Hamitic language family: geographical and historical contiguity.

Soon to follow is a tabular illustration of the unique VSO word order characteristic that is native to ancient Egyptian and the Kalenjiin language alike. The examples used are taken from Allan Gardiner # 27, 29, and 66 (1927).

Meanwhile, as we have pointed out, Coptic, in spite of the massive Greek influence that it was exposed to, still exhibits the unique verb-first word-order characteristic although less faithfully. Some examples may shed a bit of light on the unique Hamitic word-order phenomenon from the Coptic side.

- (1) A VOS example: “*‘ easchi inusoloel inje Eva* “and Eve received her adornment” literally translates as follows: “(and) **received adornment herself Eva**.”⁹⁷ Kalenjiin translation of this when retranslated literally into English, reveals a semblance with Coptic as follows: *(ago)sich salanik inee Eva* “(and) **received adornment herself Eva**.” Compare the respective literal translations of the Coptic and Kalenjiin phrases in bold. Kalenjiin *salanik* are praises heaped on a hero and the word literally means verbal “decoration,” verbal “adornment,” “praise names,” or a song devoted to the praise of an individual. An individual’s *salanik* often have nothing to do with his or her

⁹⁷ The Midnight Praise for Sunday Eve as transcribed and translated by Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi (1988).

own heroic achievements but everything to do with the achievements of the deceased person after whom he or she is named, i.e. the living individual's earlier earthly life. On rare occasions even an unrelated but outstanding living hero can lend his hallowed nickname and praises to be given to a baby. Apart from the word order, the main Coptic words used here also exist in Kalenjiin: Coptic *ea-schi* "(she) received" corresponds to Kalenjiin *-sich*; Coptic *inu-soloel* "adornment" corresponds to Kalenjiin *salan-* (also *koole*, "decoration" of the military kind). Compare the underlined Coptic roots with the given Kalenjiin roots.⁹⁸

- (2) A VSO example: **ⲡⲉⲗⲉ ⲡⲭⲟⲩⲥ ⲡⲁⲩ** *peje Pjois nav* "The Lord said to them" (Plumley, 1948:78) reads "said the Lord (to) them." Kalenjiin: *Kileenji Ptaiyaat icheek...* "said the Lord (to) them."

Table 4: Word order

Hieroglyphics, transliteration and translation by Gardiner, 1927	Category	English literal translation, normal Kalenjiin and re-translation by author ⁹⁹
1. <i>in n-k st ssh</i> the scribe brings it to thee	Eng. Literal trans. of Egypt.	brings to you it scribe
	Correct Kalenjiin	ib-uun siriin(det) ¹⁰⁰
	Lit. trans. of Kalenjiin	brings to you scribe
2. <i>heb-n n-n nb-n nfr shet hr-s</i> our good lord has sent to us a despatch about it	Eng. Lit. trans.	has sent to us lord ours who is blessed a despatch about it

⁹⁸ (see *Maat* and reincarnation discussion, Sambu, 2007:139–197).

⁹⁹ The words chosen for the Kalenjiin sentences here are those that fit in grammatically according to modern usage. Otherwise most of the words used in the ancient Egyptian sentences here exist in Kalenjiin with similar although not necessarily appropriate meanings, e.g.: *ra*, Egyptian for "sun" or "day" is retained in Kalenjiin for "day" but is no longer applicable for "sun"; Egyptian *pt*, "sky," "heaven" is retained in Kalenjiin for "day" although another Kalenjiin name for the Deity is Che-peet which suggests that "the heavens" once went by the word *peet* as in Egyptian; Egyptian *nb* (*nebo*) "lord" corresponds to Kalenjiin *nebo* (owner or *nebou* "the ruler") but *kiptaayaat* here is more appropriate and is conveniently traceable to ancient Egyptian. *nfr* which is translated by Gardiner as "good," is translated here by the author as "the blessed" and linked to Kalenjiin *neperuroot*, "the blessed" because *nfrt* (according to Faulkner's dictionary) means "happiness, good fortunes" and *nfrt* translated by Faulkner as "what is good" corresponds to Kalenjiin *neperuroot* "what is blessed." contains the consonants *nfr-r-t*, which makes the Kalenjiin *neperuroot* the more representative full transcription of it.

¹⁰⁰ Kalenjiin assumes that the person being addressed is aware of the item being brought and reference to it by way of a pronoun is therefore omitted. Kalenjiin does not have an exact equivalent of the English pronoun "it." However, *kyet* or *kiyooton* "the thing," can be used in the place of the pronoun "it."

	Correct Kal.	kaako-yook-weech ptaiyaande-nyoon ne- peruroot ng'olyoot agopo kyet
	Lit. Kal. Trans.	has sent to us lord ours who is blessed a word about it (the thing)
3.  <i>rkh ssh skhr m hrw pn.</i> the scribe knows a counsel on this day.	Eng. Lit. trans.	knows scribe counsel on day this.
	Correct Kal.	ingen siriindet katigoonet(een) ra-uni. ¹⁰¹
	Lit. Kal. Trans	knows the scribe a counsel on day this.
4.  <i>wbn ra m pt.</i> the sun rises in the sky.	Eng. Lit. trans.	rises sun in sky.
	Correct Kal	togostoo asiista eem parak (written een parak) ¹⁰²
	Lit. Kal. Trans	rises sun in sky
5.  <i>nn n-k st</i> it does not belong to thee	Eng. Lit. trans.	not yours it ¹⁰³
	Correct Kal	ma neng'uung' (kyet)
	Lit. Kal. Trans	not yours (the thing)

Gender Prefixes

Like ancient Egyptian and Coptic, Kalenjiin is a sex-determining language. That is to say, it classifies names of objects into masculine, feminine, and neuter genders.¹⁰⁴ Examples: “toothbrush” in Kalenjiin is a masculine class noun and is rendered

¹⁰¹ The Kalenjiin word *Ka-tigoon-et* used here is from *tigoon*, “counsel” (v), detectable in Coptic **ⲧⲟⲩⲟⲕ ⲉⲛⲁⲓ** (*tuok enai*—Crum 1939:444) which is in turn derived from **ⲧⲟⲩⲁⲓⲧ** (*tuait*—Crum 1939:444) “teach” and **ⲛⲟⲩ** (*noei*—Crum 1939:444), “know” (Kalenjiin *nai*). The Greek appear to have borrowed from here too—or was the reverse the case? The Greek **δεικνύναι** (*deiknynai*) meaning, “show,” “teach,” “demonstrate,” seems to be as phonetically akin as it is in meaning to the above Coptic **ⲧⲟⲩⲟⲕ ⲉⲛⲁⲓ** (*tuok enai*) and can only be related through historical borrowing from or lending to the Pharaonic equivalent.

¹⁰² The ancient Egyptian *m* for “in,” as used in the sentence, corresponds to Kalenjiin *een* when the word that follows it begins with letter /p/ or /b/. So *een peet*, “in the day” becomes *eem peet*. *Een parak* becomes *eem parak*, “in the sky.” The choice of /m/ for “in” in the Egyptian sentence was due to such phonetic assimilation by the following /p/ of *pt* (Lambdin 1983:xvi) just as it still does in Kalenjiin. Otherwise one of the words for “in” in Egyptian was similar to the Kalenjiin *een*:  *en* (Budge 1895), Coptic **ⲉⲛ** (*hen*) or **ⲛⲉⲛ** (*khen*). The assimilation of /n/ into /m/ when it comes before /p/ is, therefore another shared characteristic between Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian. However the Mt. Elgon Kalenjiin have kept the ancient Egyptian *eem* and use it irrespective of the phonetic environment following it.

¹⁰³ Gardiner’s literal translation runs: “not to thee [it]” (1927: 54).

¹⁰⁴ Neuter, for our purpose, will cover those words whose gender we are uncertain about.

kipsiitait or, more often, *psiitait*; the “rhinoceros” (whether or not a specific one was male or female) falls into the masculine class, *kipsiricheet* or *psiricheet*.

To the Kalenjin, “a leather string,” *tapsiin-yet* is a feminine class object. So are names of some of the especially beautiful and graceful creations of nature such as *taapteet*, “a flower”; *cheplaangeet*, “a leopard”;¹⁰⁵ *talaalda*, “a cheetah” and *taapurpuuryet*, “a butterfly.” Nevertheless, among several others, the noun *chemargeet*, “a riot,” in spite of its inherent ugliness, is a member of the feminine gender noun class too!

The effective gender marker for masculine objects in Kalenjin is letter /p/ as in the above examples of *psiricheet* and *psiitait*. This also goes for personal names, e.g.: Psirmoi, Psenjen, Pseelim, Psaita, Pkeech, Prootich, etc. The *ki-* prefix that often comes before these names, especially among the central Kalenjin, is often dispensable and is not the gender marker. It is, as a matter of fact, rarely used among the northern and Mt Elgon Kalenjin. This author’s first name, Kipkoech, is, therefore, really Pkoech, and rarely does anyone use the longer version in speech, even among the central Kalenjin themselves.

The feminine gender marker is /t/, from *tie*, “girl.” Women’s names, therefore, come as follows: Tapsabei (*Tie aap Sabei*), Tapraandich (*Tie aap raandich*), Taptuee (*Tie aap Tuei*), etc. At their social level, i.e., having been initiated, *tie* means “Lady.”

Pre-circumcision girls use the prefix *che-*, which is really *tie* pronounced fast, e.g. *Tie-aap-koeech*, “Girl of sunrise,” meaning that she was born at sunrise, has her name contracted to *Tiep-koeech* and finally to Chepkoech. Other such names are Chebeet, or Chepeet, from *Tie aap peet*, “Girl of the day” (a name for Asiis too), Chepkoorir, from *Tie aap kooriri*, “Girl of dawn,” etc.¹⁰⁶

Certainly, Coptic (and perhaps ancient Egyptian too) follows the same rules as to the names and goes further to segregate adjectives as well, a rule the Kalenjin-speakers have since discarded. So in Coptic, Christ, **ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ** (*Kristos*), must take a masculine prefix /p/ and become **ΠΙ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ** (*Pi-Kristos*). Christ, however, is often known as the “exalted one,” i.e. “the Lord,” and “Lord” is **ΘΙΣ** (*Chois*), but must be rendered **ΠΘΙΣ** (*Pchois*). Godhead is **ΝΟΥΤ** (*Nuute*) but must be rendered in the masculine form **ΠΝΟΥΤ** (*Pnuute*). The Coptic masculine gender marker is clearly, therefore, /p/ as in Kalenjin.

Coptic feminine gender marker is equally clear and is, as in Kalenjin, /t/. We have such examples as: **ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΣ** (*Theotokos*), “Mother of God” borrowed from the Greek language. The Copts render it **ⲧⲉⲟⲧⲟⲕⲟⲥ** (*t-Theotokos*) and often address her also in Coptic as, **ⲧⲓ Ⲙⲁⲥ ⲛⲟⲩⲧ** (*ti-Mas Nuute*), “the God bearer” = “Mother

¹⁰⁵ To the Merkweta and probably others to the north of Kalenjin country, “leopard,” *meril* (*meliil*), appears to fall under the neuter gender. *Meliil*, or *meliilo*, appears to be the original all-Kalenjin word for “leopard,” *cheeplangeet* (from *cheep-laany-keet*, lit. “she, the tree climber”) being a descriptive euphemism for it.

¹⁰⁶ “Girl of” or “Lady of,” may also be rendered *tie-po*, instead of *tie-aap*. A good example is *Tie-po-chii*, “someone’s daughter,” which contracts to *Chepochii*.

of God.” But even more often, she is addressed as the virgin, Παρθένος (*parthenos*), but which must carry its gender marker: (*ti-Parthenos*).¹⁰⁷

An interesting point to note here is that where Coptic, in particular, consigns a word to feminine gender, for example, Kalenjiin does the same for the corresponding word even if the word does not bear any visual semblance to the Coptic one. ተሣሕሕሰ (*tipsishi*), “soul,” for example, may not resemble very closely its Kalenjiin equivalents, *che-sawiil* or *tamirmiir-yet*, but all are classified feminine. ተሮሞጺጺ (*tichrombi*), “dove” does not resemble Kalenjiin *cheep-tuug-eet*,¹⁰⁸ the corresponding noun, yet both are feminine gender nouns. More examples could be cited.

Ancient Egyptian is not as clear as Coptic and Kalenjiin as regards the gender marking characteristic and some established positions among Egyptologists (such as that the feminine marker comes as a suffixal /t/) are still debatable as we shall see shortly under the topic “Noun Formation.” However, a few examples may come from the Kalenjiin-sounding Pharaohs’ names such as  Psamtek,  Psamut, and  Ptulmis (B.Dict. 940–942). The last is better known as Ptolemy, a probable Egyptian, or Egyptianised, name for the succession of Greek generals that ruled Egypt after Alexander “The Great.”

Kalenjiin appears to have gradually dropped the habit of affixing a gender particle to every adjective and verb. This was a typical Hamitic habit, which is evident in ancient Egyptian, Coptic as well as in the living Maa(sai) language. When Hollis carried out his research between 1904 and 1908, he found out that the older section of the Nandi still insisted on prefixing discriminative gender particles to certain words. He wrote:

“The particles *akut* and *angut*, which are prefixed to a few substantives and to one or two classes of pronouns to form the plural, appear to have in former times also marked the gender, *akut* being used for the masculine and *angut* for the feminine; but the distinction has now been nearly lost sight of, and *akut* or *angut* are used somewhat indiscriminately by the present generation. Old people however, still generally use ‘*akut-kwanda*’ for the fathers, ‘*angut kamet*’ for the mothers; ‘*akut ng’o*’ (m.) and ‘*angut ng’o*’ (f.) for ‘Who?’” (Hollis 1909:158).

Noun Formation

The one physical attribute that makes ancient Egyptian nouns resemble Kalenjiin nouns so strikingly is the common use of letter /t/ suffix for certain classes of nouns. It is certain that as far as the Kalenjiin language is concerned, the nouns that have a /t/ suffix belong to the class called by the pioneering anthropologists, such as

¹⁰⁷ This is perhaps the term that the Kalenjiin use for all virgins and youth in general, *parnoot*. But the word appears to have undergone metathesis, i.e., /n/ has somehow exchanged places with /t/. The Coptic examples used here are mainly from Mattar (Chapter 3).

¹⁰⁸ Also *sorooryet*, neuter.

Hollis and Huntingford, as well as the linguists Bryan and Tucker; *secondary* noun forms. They are secondary as opposed to nouns in the *primary* form that do not have a /t/ suffix of the grammatical sense.¹⁰⁹

The grammatical /t/ ending attached to the secondary nouns is the rough equivalent of the English indefinite and definite articles “a,” “an,” and “the.” Kalenjin distinguishes between “man” *chii* and “a man” *chiito*. The former is in the primary noun form and has no grammatical /t/ suffix while the latter is in the secondary noun form and has a grammatical /t/ suffix. The distinction between primary and secondary noun forms will become clearer when some more examples are listed shortly.

Dr Taaita araap-Toweett in his *Kalenjin Nouns and Their Classifications* master’s thesis (1975) introduced the terms *inclusive singular nouns* (i.s.n.) to refer to all Kalenjin singular nouns that are in their primary form and do not, therefore, have the grammatical /t/ suffix. Toweett invented the term *exclusive singular nouns* (e.s.n.) for nouns in singular form that generally have the grammatical /t/ suffix. Whether we use the pioneers’ terminology or Toweett’s, the difference is not substantial enough to alter the course of our discussion here.

The Kalenjin singular secondary nouns are formed by affixing the /t/ grammatical suffix as follows:

1. to a noun in its primary form, e.g. *ko* “house” (primary) which then becomes *koot* “a house” or “the house” (secondary)
2. to an adjective in its root form, e.g. *leel* “white” (adj.) which then becomes *leelinto* (*leelindo*) “whiteness” (noun)
3. to a verb in its root form, e.g. *pir* “beat up” (verb) which then becomes *pireet* “a beating” or “the beating” (noun)

The author’s finding, like all the other discoveries of relationships between the Kalenjin language and the ancient Egyptian language (including Coptic) is original. It establishes that ancient Egyptian adjectival and verbal conjugation to form the noun also parallels the Kalenjin system under the above numbers 2 and 3 respectively. Number 1 is discussed below. What is most significant about this behaviour is that it is predictable and, as we saw above, predictability is one of the linguists’ important standards of proof of genetic affinity. The many examples given below confirm that predictability for both languages.

As for affixing a /t/ ending to the primary form of nouns in order to generate the secondary form with respect to ancient Egyptian, we immediately stumble upon a difficulty. Although it is quite a challenge to be able to state that the system of

¹⁰⁹ “Secondary” and “primary” noun classification names are terms used by G.W.B. Huntingford in a 1940s introduction to a later reprint of Hollis’ book, *The Nandi, Their Language and Folklore*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1909, and by Tucker and Bryan, 1966. *Linguistic Analyses, The Non-Bantu Languages of North-eastern Africa*. Oxford University Press.

primary noun conjugation did not conform to the one employed by the Kalenjiin language, it is not easy to make a categorical statement to the effect that the system was the same as that followed by the Kalenjiin. But we will soon surmount that hurdle in a systematic manner. The explanation for this may be found within the ancient Egyptian system of writing. Most words were written in their primary form and, given the context, the reader would make out while reading where he or she should inflect to reflect the right tense or noun class. Gardiner (1927:#267–272) has noted this difficulty with respect to verbs.

Occasionally, the ancient scribe would show distinction between the primary and the secondary noun e.g.,  *sr* or *zr* (but perhaps pronounced *chir*) stood for “sheep” in general, the way we may say “cow,” while “a (particular) sheep” would be indicated with a  /t/ suffix in the Kalenjiin manner as follows:   *sr(i)t*. (F.Dict. 235).¹¹⁰ This corresponds to Kalenjiin primary and secondary forms *kechiir* “sheep” and *kechiiryet* “a sheep.” But this brings us to another controversial area.

Most Egyptologists originally thought, and many still think, that ancient Egyptian was genetically related to the Semitic languages (e.g. Gardiner 1927 #26, Loprieno 1995:5). One prominent characteristic of a Semitic language such as Hebrew, or Arabic, is the use of the /t/ suffix to indicate a feminine class noun. The Egyptologists, therefore, went ahead and classified all ancient Egyptian nouns that ended with a /t/ feminine gender class nouns in conformity with the standard Semitic practice. These were, theoretically speaking, an awful lot of nouns indeed considering that ancient Egyptian behaved like Kalenjiin where almost all verbs, adjectives, and singular nouns, except proper nouns, are bound to end up with a grammatical /t/ suffix in their secondary nominal form. Most of the examples used in this section illustrate this fact as incidental and it does not take a renowned expert to prompt the Egyptologists to take another look at this incredible oversight. Why should a word be of the masculine gender in the primary noun form, adjectival, or verbal form, and then transmigrate to the feminine gender class in its secondary, or definite nominal form?

The ancient Egyptian scribe may take some part of the blame himself for this. Two clear examples will illustrate this new orthographical view that this author is introducing. For the convenience and beauty of presentation, he would insert a /t/ at the end when he meant that it should be pronounced first. 1) The word  *sn*, “brother,” had its natural opposite, “sister,” which he wrote thus:   and which the Egyptologist promptly transcribes *snt*, the /t/ coming at the end because that is where the ancient scribe had put his  /t/. However, fortunately, Coptic comes to our aid here. In Coptic, “brother” is *soon* or (*saan*) as in ancient Egyptian and “sister” still goes by the same old word but the letter /t/ comes first and is

¹¹⁰ Faulkner indicates that the latter noun with a /t/ suffix represents a ewe (female of sheep) although the first form represents any sheep. This typifies a long-running misconception among Egyptologists as the discussion that follows the statement endeavours to demonstrate.

pronounced first: (*tasoon*[e]). 2) A similar confusion, owing to the ancient scribe's concern for aesthetics, has persisted in respect of the word for "father." "Father," or "my father," "the elder," "the priest," or "the ancestor" in ancient Egyptian, in Coptic, and in Kalenjiin is the same word: *paiyoot*. But the ancient scribes executed this one as follows: , which the Egyptologists have promptly transcribed *atf*, *itf*, or *it* (Gardiner, 1927:555).¹¹¹ But Coptic and Kalenjiin indicate that the  /f/ should be pronounced before the other letters—although it is actually written last—and that its value was closer to /p/ and certainly not /f/.¹¹²

In our discussion on the one important Hamitic grammatical or inflexional morpheme, the /t/ suffix, we are going to have to recall an observation as well as a standard set by linguists that we read in Chapter 5, namely that, the class which is least of all exposed to borrowing is composed by grammatical morphemes. The morphs, which serve as their expression, are mostly homogenous as to their origin. This has been observed to hold true even in extreme cases of 'language mixture' (Cf. Katičić, 1970:129).

As mentioned above, Kalenjiin generates in a standard and predictable way, by means of an inflexional morpheme, the secondary types of nouns from primary noun forms, adjectives and verbs (the gerund equivalents). The suffixation with the morphemic article /t/ is also a prominent feature of the ancient Egyptian language—certainly, it is as concerns the formation of nouns by means of inflecting adjectives and verbs. The rule of thumb was, and is still one and the same: somehow append a  /t/ suffix to the nominal, verbal, or adjectival form, and you have your secondary form of noun, or gerund! A few examples will follow: 

au "large" (adjective), becomes  *au-t* "largeness" (noun) (B.Dict. 2b). This corresponds to Kalenjiin *oo* or *woo*, "large," and *oo-into/oo-into*, "largeness."  *bin* (adjective) "bad," "evil" becomes  *bint*, "evil" (noun) (F.Dict.:81). This is either Kalenjiin *bunyoön* (adjective), "enemy" which becomes *bunyoöt* "an/the enemy," or *boön* (adjective) "witching," which becomes *bondit*, "an/the evil," or "the witchcraft."

 *am* (verb) "eat," becomes  *am-t* (noun) "food" (Gardiner 1927:612 B.Dict.:120b). This is Kalenjiin *am* (verb) "eat" which becomes *amiit* "food" or *amdit* "the food." Also consider  *msyt*, "evening meal" (Gardiner 1927:612) and Kalenjiin *amisyeet*, meaning any meal. These are from the Egyptian/Kalenjiin verb-root *am* "eat."

¹¹¹ Gardiner (1927:55) translates  as "father," "name of a class of elder priests." The Kalenjiin use the same term for "father," "elder," "ancestor," and also for the priest of Asiis.

¹¹² Coptic words from Crum's *Coptic Dictionary*, and various church liturgical material. *Saan* survives in Kalenjiin as a popular kinship term for "brother-in-law" or "son-in-law."

 *mn* “be ill,” becomes  *men-t*, “sickness,” “disease,” “wound” (Gardiner *ibid.* 615, B.Dict.:296). This is Kalenjiin *mian* “be ill,” which becomes *mian-eet*, the state of being sick and *mion-to/mion-do*, “sickness,” “disease,” “illness.”

 *metu*, “to speak,” “to talk” becomes  *met-t*, “speech,” “decree,” “word” (B.Dict.:335a). This is Kalenjiin *mwa*, “speak,” which becomes *mwaet*, “speech,” or *mwaitaet* “announcement.” Also consider Kalenjiin *amda* (*amta*), “preach,” “inform,” which becomes *amdaet* (*amtaet*), “sermons,” “lessons,” and “information.”

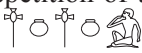
The following are further examples from Raymond Faulkner’s *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (1962). They clearly demonstrate predictable noun formation by adding a ^o /t/ suffix to verbs and adjectives in the Kalenjiin manner.

 *s-r* “be wise” becomes  *s-rt* “wisdom, understanding”;
 *k-i* “think about” becomes  *k-t* “thoughts, a plan, a device”;
 *shms* “follow, accompany” becomes  *shmswt* “following suit”;
 *krs* “bury” becomes  *krst* “burial”;  *mri* “love” (verb) becomes  *mrwt* “love” (noun) or  *mrwty* “the well beloved” (noun).  *knh* “dark” (adjective)  *knmt* “darkness” (noun).

Reverends Burnette and Gerald Fish’s research in Kalenjiinland, which culminated in their book *The Kalenjiin Heritage, Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (1995), probably saved the Kalenjiin words *kisanei* and *kisoneito* from outright extinction. The near-loss of the word to the Kalenjiin language serves as a good demonstration of how words can be lost when the relative cultural requirement ceases to be observed for one reason or another. The stem of the word *saan* “experience extreme pain,” “bitterly regret,” “come to grief,” is still in use. But the special derivatives in the primary noun form (*kisanei*) and secondary noun form (*kisoneito*) were about to be forgotten because the *kisanei* cleansing rituals that followed major catastrophes in the past, such as the anthrax epidemic, are no longer observed. A similar word existed in ancient Egyptian and behaved in the manner of its Kalenjiin cognate as follows:  *ksn* “painful,” “painfully,” “irksome,” “wretched,” etc. With the addition of the grammatical ^o /t/ suffix it became, in the noun form,  *ksnt* “trouble,” “misfortune” (F. Dict. 281), which is Kalenjiin *kisoneito*. The practice of Kalenjiin *kisoneito* went as follows: after a major catastrophe such as that occasioned by anthrax, the nearest road junction to the epicentre of the problem would be marked and passers-by would be obliged to throw a leaf at a designated spot each time they came upon the junction. After some time, there would result a mountain of leaves.

Today's practice of laying a wreath of flowers is a successor to *kisoneito* type of ritual although it is now an import from the west. The practice of laying wreaths at funerals, or at the tombs of departed statesmen, or at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, are current practices reminiscent of *kisoneito*. Some of the old epicentres of catastrophes on Kalenjiinland still bear names that point to that ancient practice, e.g.: *Kapsoguut*, "the place of leaves," as informed by the author's mother by way of confirmation of the Fish's findings. The author's enquiry as to why Kisanana trading centre in Tugenland came to be so named came to nought. The word for the Kipsigiis equivalent of *kisoneito* here is *kimng'ooche* (o.i. the Hon. Morogo, the local political leader). But since Kisanana is situated at a meeting point of major roads, one suspects that it may have been a "place of leaves" at some time in lost history, following a now-forgotten tragedy—but this is only an educated guess!

Reduplication

"Verbs signifying continuous or repeated human actions, habitual occupations, sounds, colours, and violent movements are apt to be created from bilateral or trilateral stems by the repetition of two of the radical consonants. Thus are formed quadriliteral verbs like  *ndnd* 'take counsel' from  *nd* 'ask'...  *ptpt* 'crush' (simplex unknown)...  *swtw* 'walk', 'promenade' (simplex unknown)..." (Gardiner 1927:210).

The above statement, from Gardiner, needs to be expounded on and enriched a little with the Kalenjiin parallels because:

1. Kalenjiin conforms to this habit.
2. Kalenjiin vocabulary is a ready source of the probable simplex forms where Gardiner could only say, "simplex unknown."

Reduplication is a feature that is common in many languages, even to some that are not genetically related to the Pharaonic tongues. Gardiner has cited Hebrew as one of such languages (1927:211). To this we could add some Bantu languages, among them, and very significantly, Kiswahili.

Reduplication involves the repetition of a verb or a part of it in order to portray repetition of an action. As far as Kiswahili and Kalenjiin are concerned, such repetition would tend to imply that the victim, or the beneficiary of the action, suffered or benefited less from the action upon it than would be understood if the simplex form of the verb had not been reduplicated.

Examples: the above-cited ancient Egyptian words, *nd*, "ask" and *ndnd*, "take counsel"; *ptpt*, "crush" and *swtw*, "walk (about)," "promenade," are paralleled as follows in Kalenjiin: Kalenjiin *neet* means "teach" and is comparable to ancient Egyptian *nd* above; *neet-a-neet*, to be compared with *ndnd*, bears the notion "teach several things" or "teach severally" or "impart knowledge to several different people (or groups—but none too seriously)."

Pet, “split,” is the suggested Kalenjiin simplex form for the above-listed reduplicated form *ptpt*, “crush.” In the simplex form, the Kalenjiin *pet* implies “splitting” into chunks that are relatively larger and fewer. The Kalenjiin reduplicated form *pet-aa-pet* or *petpet* implies that the victim is to be “split or crushed into several tiny little bits.”

Swtwt, “walk,” “promenade” as listed for Egyptian above, parallels Kalenjiin *soitaat*, meaning, “walk around sight-seeing,” “explore the area” and is from the simplex form *soi-ta* “look around.”

Ancient Egyptian  *tem*, “cut” in the simplex form, yields the reduplicated form  *temtem* (B.Dict.:878a). These are paralleled by the Kalenjiin words *tem*, “cut” (esp. Nandi) and *tem-aa-tem*, implying “cut severally or extensively (but none too deep).”

Ancient Egyptian simplex  *khet* “to be behind someone or something, to follow, to retreat,” etc., becomes in the reduplicated form:  *khetkhet*, “march after, follow,” etc. (B.Dict. 567–568). This is paralleled by Kalenjiin *ket*, “drive” cattle, etc. which one does by following the animals from behind, and *ket-yi*, “repeat,” “retrace.” The Kalenjiin reduplicated form *ketaaket*, among other meanings, implies the notion “driving animals (or vehicle) severally with little by way of order or purpose.”

Thus, in the Kalenjiin context at least, reduplication, while it signifies repetition of an action, has the effect of reducing the import or impact of the action.

The Causative

The grammatical aspect of causative is where one example of grammatical discordance between ancient Egyptian and Kalenjiin lies. But the discordance that is going to be reported here happens to be so consistent and predictable from case to case that it actually amounts to concordance. Causative is a grammatical analysis terminology that defines word forms that deal with causing someone or something to do something or behave in a certain way, e.g. “make cry,” “make sit,” “make move,” etc.

Ancient Egyptian *prefixes* the consonant /s/ to a verb-stem and thereby gives it a causative meaning (Gardiner 1927:211). Kalenjiin, instead of prefixing the /s/ to the verb-stem in a similar manner, *affixes* the very same /s/ to the *end* of the verb-stem. This interesting divergence in behaviour may either imply that this part of the word, in a hieroglyphically written form, should be read last unlike the Egyptologists are wont to do, or that the Kalenjiin speakers later, for some reason, reversed the position of causative particle /s/. Examples:

 *s-mn* “make to remain,” “establish,” from  *mn*, “remain” (Gardiner 1927:211). This is Kalenjiin *-meny-sii* (not a common causative form but it is

grammatically correct), “make live in a place,” from *meny*, “live in,” “be established in a place.”

  *s-hetep*, “make at peace, to pacify, to unite with, etc. from   *hetep*, “be in peace, happily,” “rest,” etc. (B.Dict.:517b, 614a) corresponds to Kalenjiin *-teep-sii*, “make sit on top of,” “make stay.” This is from *tep*, “sit on” or “stay,” “remain,” etc.

 *s-aur* “to make pregnant” from  *aur*, “to be pregnant,” “to conceive” (B.Dict.:642). This is Kalenjiin *-riy-sii*, “make to conceive” of animals, e.g. nowadays by artificial insemination. This is from *ri*, “to conceive” (of cattle, sheep, goats only). Also compare with Kalenjiin *bur-ansii* from *bur*, “to be pregnant” (of a pre-circumcision girl).

  *s-arq*, “to make an end of,” “to finish,” from   *arq*, “to complete,” “to conclude” (B.Dict.:131a, 645b). This is Kalenjiin *-rook-sii*, “bring to an end,” “bring to conclusion,” “complete,” “finish,” etc. from *rook*, “be completed, concluded,” etc.

Negation

The particle of negation, the equivalent of the English “not,” or “do not,” in ancient Egyptian, Coptic and Kalenjiin alike, is *m-* and it comes at the beginning of a phrase or sentence in all three languages, e.g. Coptic: (*momon roome khi pi*), “there is no man in the house.” This literally reads “not-present man in the house.” The Kalenjiin equivalent, to use the same words, is *momii muren een pi-yuut*, literally: “not-present man in the homestead.” *Roome*, “man” in Coptic is sometimes spelled *roomen* as in (*roomen Kiime*) which literally means “man black,” i.e. “black man” in reference to “an Egyptian” (Crum 110a). This Coptic *roomen* then is here matched with Kalenjiin *muren* and may constitute a good example of a phenomenon that linguists call a metathesis case, where a word, over time and space, has its letters, or sounds, transposed. The Kalenjiin word for “house” which should ideally be used here is *ko*, which also has the same meaning in ancient Egyptian and Coptic. The choice of *pi-yuut* here was made in order to match the Coptic *pii*. That *pii* now means “compound,” “household” or “homestead (*pi-yuut*),” instead of just “house,” in Kalenjiin, serves as one example of the phenomenon that linguists call semantic shift, where a word, while it retains context, changes—within reasonable range—in its meaning.

An example from ancient Egyptian may go as follows:      *m-am a* “not (you) eat me” (B.Dict. 266a)¹¹³, i.e. “do not eat me.” This is Kalenjiin *me-am-aa(n)*. Literally translated, this is, as in ancient Egyptian, “not you eat me.”

¹¹³ Budge does not supply the transcription and the author has supplied his own here in the Egyptologists’ conventional manner, otherwise the correct transcription should be closer to the Kalenjiin parallel.

The other common particle of negation in ancient Egyptian in the place of  *m*- was  or just  which the Egyptologists have transcribed *nn* or *n* (Gardiner, 1927:80). It is quite possible that the combination  was read *mana*, as suggested by the present article of negation in Mt. Elgon Kalenjiin.

Summary of Part III: Relating the Kalenjiin Language to the Ancient Egyptian Language

With the use of some material from a literary giant of the 20th century, the French anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, who is regarded as the first person to apply the theoretical approach known as “structuralism” to anthropology (OIE 1997/1), and an extract from a scholar who has done a lot of work in the geographically relevant area of Eastern Africa, Christopher Ehret, we have demonstrated the essence of, and justified, the detailed extent of indulgence in the linguistics discussion here.

The two scholars have argued, in effect, that the historical development of a language can be used to explain the whole cultural and historical development of a people just as culture and history can explain the structures of a language, language being one of its components, apart from constituting its pivotal foundation stone.

A key part of the exercise employed at least two hundred ancient Egyptian/Coptic-Kalenjiin lexical items of the basic and of the cultural nature, arranged in two respective disciplined scientific ways that have been prescribed by linguists for the determination of genetic relationships or otherwise between languages. One list constitutes a lexicostatistical table that analyses comparatively the basic words of language, this being an established *tertium comparationis* that linguists use for determining genetic relationships between languages; the other being a list of the major cultural and basic words that are arranged in semantic domains, i.e., in groups that are governed by ranges of similar meaning, this being an exercise whose main purpose is to eliminate the element of mere coincidence and fortuitous chance.¹¹⁴ The cited work of Huntingford supplied additional evidence from a disinterested alien party. That it was compiled with the help of individuals from a then virtually wholly illiterate and largely ignorant (all in the western sense) Kalenjiin community, adds to its credibility as an objective measure of cognateness rather than that it takes away from it.

After demonstrating the cognateness of the selected ancient Egyptian/Coptic-Kalenjiin lexical items, we went ahead to attempt to prove that even the key grammatical rules that were followed in the application of such and most other lexical items by the languages being compared were, basically, identical.

We demonstrated that the basic word order employed by ancient Egyptian, Coptic, and Kalenjiin, was the same, namely VSO or VOS. The most outstanding shared

¹¹⁴ The 200 are part of a collection of over 1000 ancient Egyptian/Coptic-Kalenjiin cognate pairs in the possession of the author.

feature here is the verb-first word order characteristic of the languages that were once called Hamitic and Nilo-Hamitic. This represents such a localised idiosyncrasy that even other Nilotic languages such as Dholuo are excluded.

We also demonstrated that at least the Coptic stage of Egyptian and the Kalenjiin language commonly employ the /t/ feminine gender marker as a prefix to feminine class nouns as much as they both do the /p/ masculine gender marker for nouns that are classified as masculine.

We also demonstrated how Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian follow an identical rule in generating definite (or secondary) nouns from substantive nominal forms, from verbs and from adjectives, namely that they both add a /t/ suffix to such grammatical forms.

We also reported an identical use of reduplication between the ancient Egyptian and the Kalenjiin languages. So have we also noted the interesting consistent divergence in the use of the causative particle /s/, which the Kalenjiin language places at the final position of the verb while ancient Egyptian places the same (causative particle /s/) at the initial position of the verb. We concluded the exercise by a short demonstration of the uniform usage of the negative particle *mo* by ancient Egyptian, Coptic and Kalenjiin.

All these grammatical areas of convergence are within the many and varied *tertia comparationis* whose minimum fulfilment is demanded by the linguistics discipline if one were to reach a conclusion that two languages had a genetic relationship. Needless to say, what we have ended up with, as cognates, are too many to owe it to fortuitous chance.

Part IV

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusions from the Angle of Oral Traditions

The tradition that the ancestors of the Kalenjiin originated from ancient Egypt is manifestly old and the first Europeans to comment on the Kalenjiin duly noted it. Their informants were completely illiterate in that they could neither read nor write and probably were even ignorant of the population settled in Egypt in modern times, i.e. they had no external knowledge other than what they had heard from their own ancestors. The present elderly informants are not much different either in that they generally have no knowledge of the archive and book-based information on Egyptological topics and their ancestral claim owing to their illiteracy. The coincidence between their oral testimonies with the written sources can only, therefore, serve to strengthen the historicity of their tradition.

The tradition does not remember what a great place Egypt was, so the early informants were not trying to show off to the colonial officers and their compatriot anthropologists. They were merely passing on a flat oral tradition in the form in which they had received it from their parents. All those people could not have lied.

In Kenya, the legend is told reasonably uniformly all the way across the expanse between the northernmost Kalenjiin section of Pokoot and the southernmost Kalenjiin section of Bomet Kipsigiis; all the way across that swath of territory between the Tugen/Pokoot of Baringo East and the Sabaoth Kalenjiin of Mt Elgon to the west. This legend is still being told and can be checked against the oldest archival records and double-checked with the anthropological books.

According to the standards by which oral tradition may be judged, something definite can be said about this traditional claim. The standards were set most notably by Jan Vansina, who says that if the lines of transmission are independent, then independence has the same value as for written sources or oral history. If not, or if this cannot be shown positively, the source can still be used in a probationary status as grounds for a hypothesis. "Cross-cultural confirmation constitutes the most certain type of evidence" (Vansina 1980:275).

From the foregoing, and taking note of the geographical and socio-cultural spread of the tradition, we can say that there is truth to the legend. Such wide geographical and socio-cultural spread of the tradition suggests that an influential number of the ancestors of the Kalenjiin originated from Pharaonic Egypt. An important critic of oral tradition, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966)¹¹⁵ has conceded that legends, such as the one we have dealt with here, are not invented *ex nihilo* but that they are formed by modifying existing information and tales.

Another notable concession comes from Schechter (1980:110) who says:

"My conclusions suggest that the data in these traditions are not a historical simply because they are expressed in stereotyped form, that traditional

¹¹⁵ As noted and supported by Yoder, 1980:82–83.

historical literature may only twist the facts—rather than fabricate them out of the whole cloth—in order to make the past conform more closely to accepted cosmological categories, and that the effort needed to evaluate historically other versions of the tale may also pay off with some reasonable measure of historical truth.”

The said universality and uniformity of the Kalenjiin oral tradition of descent from the ancient Egyptians among all the sub-ethnic groups meet yet another scientific standard and concession from Allen and Montell. Even though theirs discusses oral history, we need to remember that there is little that differentiates the two and that such a pioneering giant of oral methodology as Jan Vansina, in fact, uses the terms “oral history” and “oral tradition” quite interchangeably:

“The trustworthiness of an oral historical tradition is a sure bet when it is present in the repertoires of more than one group within the community, whether or not disruptive social factors are present that may tend to cause each group to be biased in its opinion of the others” (Allen and Montell, 1981:85).

On the basis of place names, the names mentioned in the tradition in particular, i.e., *Tto* and *Sebben* or *Sabiiny*, and the linear nature of the north-south axis of scattered settlements of the kin groups that are variously called Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, or Hamitic, all the way up to the point where we meet the southernmost reach of the Arabs and the Arabised black populations, we can say that we have reasonably defined a cradle and the migratory route. If we can, for the sake of argument, mentally remove the Arab element, which is known to be relatively recent (arriving only from 641 AD), then we must accept that the Nilotic kin groups had settlements all the way along the Nile Valley right up to and including the Delta.

The additional element of place names, treated further in Appendix 1, only goes to enrich the place-name argument by the process of inference. These are the place names that are not mentioned specifically by the *Misiri* origin tradition but which bear pertinent meaning in the Kalenjiin language, such as “Egypt” which is ultimately from *Kiptaai* as in Kalenjiin, or *Qibtiya/Kiptaios* as recorded by the Arabs/Greeks; and “Asyut” which seems to correspond to *Suiyoot*, Kalenjiin for “wolf” or “jackal.” The correspondence can be inferred from what the Greeks called Asyut: Λύκων Πόλις (*Lyco[n]polis*), “Wolf City.”

B. Conclusions from the Comparative Linguistics Exercise

Oral tradition may have made phenomenal headway as a fully trusted historiographical tool over the last few decades. However, language still excites people as the most visible and the most powerful revelatory sign of historical, social, cultural and genetic sharing. Physical looks is another powerful revelatory sign but we are denied this one by the fact that the majority of Egyptian population has now been so thoroughly mixed that the element that we would be interested in by way of visible proof can only be inferred as one of the chief ingredients. We are,

therefore, left with the dead language to carry out tests on as the most important and readily verifiable revelatory item. On account of the sharing in the basic words of language between ancient Egyptian/Coptic and Kalenjiin, this being easily the most important linguistic litmus paper, we find the 60% full-score sharing, or the 86% total full-score and inferred sharing, absolutely revealing. The other points of cognateness as seen in the semantic domain arrangement of words; in syntactic analysis results vis-a-vis word order; noun-formation; the causative; reduplication; gender markers, and negation, etc., only go to drive the point home beyond reasonable doubt.

Linguists assume that patterned similarities, as we can witness in the various approaches to comparative linguistics in the text, are not accidental. They are symptomatic of any of the following: mutual influence, parallel development from a similar base or from a common ancestor language. Once the incidence of chance has been ruled out, we must find for unity at the ancestral level (Cf. Katičić, 1970:7).

So, from the ample evidence of lexical and syntactic affinities, we can positively conclude that the proto-Kalenjiin spoke at least a dialect of ancient Egyptian and is what is surviving as today's Kalenjiin language. The tradition of *Misiri* origin stands proven emphatically on that score. At the very least, we can say in this connection, which happens to coincide with Huntingford's theory of 1926, that the ancient Egyptians spoke a similar language to the one spoken by the proto-Kalenjiin because they both originated from a common cradle land south of Egypt. But even then we would be left with the tradition of *Tto* and *Sebben* (*Sabiiny*) of northern—and not southern—Egypt to explain away.

Part V

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The Country Name “Egypt” and Other Place-name Etymologies

This is an extension of the discussion under Chapter 3, Part I, especially with reference to place names that are either mentioned in Kalenjiin oral tradition of origin, or those that make sense etymologically vis-a-vis the ancient Egyptian and the Kalenjiin languages. That the Kalenjiin language can be employed to etymologically interpret certain ancient Egyptian place names is, on its own, most telling.

It is well documented how Egypt got its name. According to Egyptologists, the name *Egypt* is ultimately derived from the *Ka Ptah* portion of  *He-t Ka Ptah*, said to mean “house of the double (*ka*) of Ptah” (B. Dict. 1018). This was one name by which ancient Egyptians referred specifically to one time important capital city, Memphis, where the tomb of Ptah and his temple were located.

They referred to themselves as the people of *Ha ka Ptah*, which, with the help of the Kalenjiin language, may more correctly be translated as follows: “Place/homeland of Ptah,” or the “Place/homeland of the Lord.” The Kalenjiin equivalent would be *Kaap Ptaa*, *Kaakiptaa*, *Kaap-Ptaa-(iyaat)*, or *Kaa-giptaa-(iyaat)*, which mean “place/homeland of *Ki-ptaa-iyaa*,” the “Foremost,” “Lord,” “Leader” or “Ruler.” It will soon be clear, with the consideration of the Arabic and the Greek renderings, why the Kalenjiin rendering would approximate closest the actual pronunciation of the name as executed by the ancients themselves.

Ancient Egypt’s most brilliant period in international politics, the era that Egyptologists call the New Kingdom (1570–1085 BC), brought much of the land to the East of the Mediterranean Sea and much of western Asia under its firm rule (Cf. O’Connor [a], GME 1993). Apart from, but related to the above etymology, it is not inconceivable that at this stage, being so cock-a-hoop, they began referring to their motherland, Egypt, before the conquered outsiders as the land of the “ruler,” Ptah. This would be *Kaagiptaa*, as the Kalenjiin language would suggest in retrospect. It also carries the notion “the headquarters,” “the original homeland.”

The Egyptians held in awe Ptah, the “god” of Menes, the legendary king who had founded the capital of Memphis upon unifying Upper and Lower Egypt around 3000 BC. Throughout the New Kingdom era, Egypt was the greatest superpower in the whole world, as the ancients then knew it. But even then and as they appear to have glorified other saints and the so-called gods other than Ptah from time to time, it is conceivable that they all held Menes to be the greatest of the kings for he had managed the unification feat. His capital of Memphis would seem to have remained the eternal psychological capital irrespective of where the real administrative headquarters was situated from time to time. Or how else, one would ask, would this location, of all the locations that had hosted kings, be the one that, in the eyes

of the Greeks, deserved to give its name to Egypt? Is it any wonder that the ancient Egyptians themselves also called Memphis  *Makha tau*, “the balance of the Two Lands” (B.Dict. 996b). Quite curiously, the ancient Egyptian word for “balance”  *mcht* (F.Dict. 115), which probably should be transcribed *mechai-t*, is very close to the English word “measure.” The *-t* suffix of *mechait* is the Hamitic definite article equivalent to the English “a,” “an” and “the” which is identically applicable to both Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian (see Chapter 6, main Text). The ancient Egyptian balance symbol  was used to represent justice. It is still used as a symbol of justice in many parts of the world today, including South Africa. The word for the “branding iron” in Kalenjiin, *mecheita*, suggests another way of transcribing the hieroglyphic word  because the branding of an animal safeguarded the owner’s indisputable right of ownership and thus upheld justice. But it is the speculative *Kaagiptaa* rendering that the Greeks may have corrupted and promoted in their literature as *Aegyptus*.

The older and true name by which the ancient Egyptians referred to their own country was *Kemet*, which, as is shown in the main text, merely translates to “the country.” This is analysed there alongside the Kalenjiin equivalent, *emeet*, also meaning “the country.” *Kemet* is often thought to have been derived from an ancient Egyptian word for “black,” and thus to mean “the black land” because the soil along the fertile Nile basin is generally of a dark hue—like the more familiar black cotton soil. The various Euro-Egyptologists, Gardiner, Budge, Crum, etc., whose works are cited extensively in this book, subscribe to the “black land” theory. On the other hand, the Afro-centric literature (especially that which is championed by the editors Ivan van Sertima and Amon Saba Saakana) generally subscribes to the theory that *Kemet* is from “black land,” yes, but that “black” in this context refers to the black people of that land of ancient Egypt. However, the Kalenjiin language suggests that this was just a word meaning “the country” because the Kalenjiin rendering, *emeet*, does not seem to suggest “black” (but it is possible that the notion of “black” has been forgotten over time). Nevertheless, certain Kalenjiin words for “black”: *chemis(o)*, *kimis(o)* (Hollis 1909) seem to echo the Pharaonic word for “black.”

Πκημῖς (*Pkiimis*) is a Greek rendering of an ancient Egyptian person’s name which means “black” (Crum:110 a); it corresponds to Kalenjiin *Kimis*, or *Kimiiso*, the nickname for a man of exceptionally dark pigmentation but more often the name of a black ox—a black cow is nicknamed *Chemiiso*, which must remind us of the Egyptian place name “Chemmis” that gave its name to the science of “chemistry.” Otherwise Chemmis was the floating island where Isis, taking her infant son Horus with her, fled to, out of reach of Set, the evil king who wanted Horus killed. She hid him in the bulrushes. The drama anticipates a scenario that was later to be re-enacted in the narratives of Krishna, Moses and Jesus (Cf. Quirke, 1992:61).

“Dark of night” in Kalenjiin, *kemoi*, *kemoout*, corresponds to the ancient Egyptian equivalent as preserved in Coptic ⲕⲙⲓⲙⲉ (*kmiime*). And the Kalenjiin word for “jet black,” *mis*—as in *tui mis*, “jet black”—may be related to the other old name of Egypt, *Misiri* (Read the argument surrounding the word “Hamite” in Chapter 2, main text).

Future researchers may want to investigate why the Kaitui area, of north-western Kipsigiis, is called so. The name suggests “black land,” “black place” or “this black homeland,” *kaa-i-tuui*. It seems to echo in form ancient Egypt’s name for Heliopolis (Heliopolis is Greek for “City of the Sun”). The modern name of that general area is Cairo. It has been claimed by informal Coptic circles that the ancients rendered it *Kah hi ra*, “the land of the sun (*ra*),” which the ancient Greeks simply translated to Heliopolis.

However, the suggestion that the modern name Cairo is from ancient Egyptian *Kah-hi-ra*, does not generally find favour with the Egyptian Arabs. The latter believe that their own ancestors named Cairo so with reference to Arabic for “victory” after they had conquered Egypt. This is an informal lay debate, the Copts of Egypt holding the “City of the Sun” *Kah hi ra* view and attributing it to their ancestors while the Arabs, who are generally Muslim, hold the “Victory” view, also attributing it to their conquering ancestors from the Arabian Peninsula.

The Ptah to whom the *He-t ka Ptah* place name referred in the ancient Egyptian context was probably a deified ancient ruler of pre-historic Egypt. By the time of Menes, Ptah had become a major “god”—that is if granted that the Egyptians indeed worshipped many “gods” simultaneously and/or even serially, as generations of Egyptologists have successfully endeavoured to make the world believe. It is doubtful that the Egyptians, as individuals, were polytheistic, and the grounds that support this contrary stand are amply given in the author’s book, *The Kalenjiin People’s Egypt Origin Revisited: Was Isis Asiis?*

The ancient Greeks pronounced and wrote *He-t ka Ptah*, *Kiptaai*, or *Kaagiptaa*—as *Gyptios*, *Kiptaios* or *Aegyptus* (Webster 1934) and through them the world ended up with the present form, “Egypt.” The Kalenjiin *Kaa-giptaa* is well echoed here. However, the other Greek alternative, *Kiptaios*, incorporates the common Greek suffixal particle attached to proper and place names, *-os*, which when removed, we are left with *Kiptai*, which is the same word, meaning the “Lord” and which is still extant in Kalenjiin, pertinently referring to God and Jesus, as pointed out in the main text.

The Arabs, in turn, after their conquest and occupation of Egypt since 641 AD, corrupted *Het K Ptah*, *Kagiptaa* or, most likely *Kiptaai*—the *Kiptai* or *Kiptai-os* of the Greeks—to *Qibtiya*. *Qibtiya* has since been used by the Arabs to refer to any Egyptian of the native Coptic Christian Church (Webster 1934). It should not escape our notice that this Arabic rendering, *Qibtiya*, like the Greek *Kiptaios*, mirrors most the *Kiptaai*- of Kalenjiin.

As already mentioned, these days, *Kiptaiyaat* or ***Ptaaiyaat*** is the venerated title for God and Jesus Christ among the Christianised sections of the Kalenjiin. It is very instructive that the first Kalenjiin converts to Christianity early in the 20th century actually chose to call God and Jesus Christ, especially the latter, **Ptah** or **Ptaa**. The *-iyaat* suffix in ***Ptaaiyaat*** merely stands for the definite article equivalent to the English language's "the."

An attempt is made in Chapter 3, main text, to establish the probable cradle-land of the Kalenjiin people as being in the region around the modern Delta location of Abusir (ancient, *Ddw*). Memphis (ancient, *He-t Ka Ptah*—among other names) and Sebennytus (the home of the Sebennies, as recorded by Herodotus) are not far off from the legendary *Tto*, or Abusir.

The old names of these Egyptian places, which are within reasonable radius, either have a distinctive Kalenjiin ring, or are mentioned outright in Kalenjiin oral history: *Tto*, *Sabiiny*, or *Sebei* respectively.

The above argument should not preclude other locations further south, which are equally likely ancient abodes of the Myoot. And place names alone do not help much because most of them would sound Kalenjiin enough—owing to there having been a close relationship between the various dialects of the Egyptian language all along Egypt's Nile Valley as reflected in the variations of Coptic dialects known today.

Place names like Asyut, and Thebes, further south, are examples. Asyut is linked to a jackal or wolf "deity" said to have gone by the name *Wepwawet*. The Greeks referred to that city as Λύκων Πόλις (*Lycopolis*), "Wolf City" (Gardiner, 1927:460). Several writers have transcribed the city's name  to approximate *Zawty* (e.g. Watterson, 1984:13), or *S-wt* (Gardiner, 1927:588). This, considered together with the modern version *Asyut*, and having in mind the Greek translation, and the Kalenjiin word for "wolf" or, more accurately, "wild dog," the city's name having been *Suiyoot*, is very likely—less so but possibly *Seseet* (Kalenjiin for "dog"). The *Seseet* suggestion only makes sense from an orthographic viewpoint, namely that the /s/ symbol and the pintail duck pictogram under it, which also reads /s/, are present in the same word.

As for Thebes, it could not have been a name of Greek origin as is often claimed and attributed to the Phoenician Prince Cadmus, who, apart from founding a city called Thebes in Greece, is said to have introduced the Alphabet to the Greeks. The chief reason for taking this stand is that the name "Thebes" makes etymological sense looked at with the benefit not only of the Kalenjiin language, but also of the Maasai language. This is in the light of the topographical fact that the Nile widens considerably at that point on its course: the Kalenjiin and Maasai word for "wide," or "broad," actually happens to be *tebees*. The Greeks also had another name for the city of Thebes, Diospolis, "Heavenly City" (MEE 98/18). So not only are the Greeks credited with renaming that city "Thebes" but also for the added name

Diospolis. This latter is obviously of Greek origin, but Thebes has little to show for a Greek word and credit must duly be given to the Africans.¹¹⁶

However, most Egyptologists consider the old names of Thebes to have been something like *Wast*, *Waset* or *No-Amon* (e.g. Gardiner, 1927:559, Watterson, 1984:13). *Wast* or *Waset* are neither a great distance phonetically away from the ancient Egyptian word for “to be wide,”  *wskh* (Gardiner, 1927:629).

Up to this point, we have made a brief attempt to relate etymologically the place names “Egypt,” “Tebes,” “Sebben,” “Tto” and “Asyut” to the Kalenjiin language, not necessarily as their ultimate source, but as an alternative instrument by which we could explain those names. If those place names could be analysed reasonably using the Kalenjiin language, then it may not be unreasonable to arrive at the otherwise inevitable conclusion that the proto-Kalenjiin language, which it is the stand of the author to equate with ancient Egyptian, was involved in the invention of those place names.

¹¹⁶ There is a sacred tree with *broad* leaves called *tebes-weet* and *en-tebes* in Kalenjiin and Maa(sai) respectively.

Appendix 2

The Civilising Debt as the Bone of Contention

Chapter 2, main text, gives an in-depth attention to the Hamite/Hamitic question. There we see that an agreement of some sort seems to have been arrived at between African and western intellectuals with regard to the interpretation and desirability, or otherwise, of the terms “Hamite” and “Hamitic.” These intellectuals cite the wide abuse of these classificatory terms, especially where the deservedly infamous “Hamitic Hypothesis” is brought in. Besides this, there is the aspect of the demeaning biblical narrative regarding the curse of the descendants of Ham, which has been used and abused effectively to enslave, disposes, and colonise the black race.



Appendix picture 1: The Great Pyramid of Cheops, Giza, Cairo, Egypt. It is associated with Pharaoh Cheops (Khufu), circa 2600 BC. It is still a mystery what technology was used in constructing this monument—*picture by author*.

However, the true purpose behind some of the intellectuals’ entry into the “de-Hamitising” of the Kalenjiin and kin that we have said so much about is probably yet unmentioned: to block that path suggested by the term “Hamite,” which inevitably and unambiguously traces the Hamitic-speaking people’s history back to Egypt, the widely acknowledged cradle of modern civilisation, of which the western society is the chief beneficiary (Cf. Diop, 1996:50).

Volney was an early western scholar who acknowledged the civilisation of the world by the Africans of the Nile Valley. He wrote at a time when millions of Africans were still languishing under slavery in many parts of the western hemisphere. While commenting on modern Egypt's heirs to the Pharaonic heritage, the Copts, he says:

“But going back to Egypt, her contribution to history provides a lot of material for reflection in philosophy. It is an exciting subject of meditation to see the present day barbarism and ignorance of the Copts who are the product of the marriage between the profound genius of the Egyptians and the brilliant mind of the Greeks. To think that this black race, which today is our slave and an object of contempt, is the same one to which we owe our arts, our sciences and even the words we pronounce... To imagine in fact that it is this very people (white) who claim to be friends of freedom and humanity that has approved the most barbaric of slavery and raised the question of whether the black man possesses the same intelligence as the white man” (1787:74—Diop, 1996:122).



Appendix picture 2: A statue of Cheops, Abydos, the Dynasty, around 2600 BC. 7.5 cm (Museum of Egyptian Antiques)—Picture courtesy of Richard-Lepsius-Institute, Humboldt University, Berlin



Appendix picture 3: King's head, thought to be Cheops', limestone, 5.7 × 3.4 cm, 4th Dyn (Munich)-Picture courtesy of Richard-Lepsius-Institute, Humboldt University, Berlin.



Appendix picture 4: Cheop's head restored electronically by the author under the safe assumption that Cheops, like most people, had a symmetrical face and the intact left side of the nose therefore resembled the right side which is vandalised.



Appendix picture 5: Thought to be the earliest preserved garment from Egypt, and possibly the earliest linen garment extant in the world, this child's tunic was discovered by Sir Flinders Petrie in a 1st Dynasty (3100–2700 BC) mastaba at Tarkhan (UC.28614B). Barbara Adams, *Biblical Archeologist*/December 1984)

Ancient Egypt's being the cradle of the modern world civilisation is completely beyond doubt. That fact is widely acknowledged. But the picture that it was anything but indigenous African, has been painted consistently by a few less-than-honest Egyptologists who have by doing this laid ground for the undeserved embarrassment of the more honest among them and of the Egyptological discipline in general. Cheikh Anta Diop (1996:51) has a strong view on this:

“... that the idea of black Egypt having civilised the entire earth has been unanimously accepted from antiquity (all ancient writers and philosophers without exception—both Greek and Roman: Herodotus, Diodorus, etc., etc.) up to the peak of modern imperialism. It is true that as a result of its success in exploiting all peoples of the world, today's capitalist bourgeoisie has become most powerful and consequently has bought the conscience of many. Thus certain Egyptologists, among others, have been helping to prepare the moral grounds for this travesty by trying to erase from all minds the historical fact that Black Egypt civilised the whole world.”

Below are some further forthright excerpts from various sources as well as from the writings of some of the most respected classical Greeks, as mentioned by Diop, that provide us with the facts. From studying these honest records, we can begin to imagine the possible reasons why anyone could be jealous enough to wish all the branches of the descendants of the ancient Egyptians extinct. There is too much of glory at stake and too huge an un-repayable debt is owed to those mothers and fathers of civilisation:

- On the Hamitic language: Egyptian language has a longer recorded history—almost 5,000 years—than any other language...
- Spinning and weaving were ancient crafts; indeed the oldest known article of clothing comes from Egypt and dates to c. 3000 BC...
- Ancient Egypt, homeland of the Egyptian civilisation, one of the earliest and greatest civilisations, which began in about 3100 BC, flourished for over 2,000 years up until 1070 BC, and ended in about 30 BC...
- Ancient Egyptian civilisation was remarkable for its richness and sophistication, seen not only in the great monuments that to this day bear witness to the power of Pharaohs and the skill of engineers, but also in its evolved system of government, the invention of irrigation and picture-writing, the beginnings of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine, and in its pantheon of deities and concepts of life after death, and great artistic skill...
- So much is this true that the Greek historian Herodotus, writing in the early 5th century BC, observed: “there is no country that possesses so many wonders, nor any that has such a number of works which defy description” (MEE 98/15).

Like the other major pillars of human civilisation listed above, the ancient Egyptians’ “evolved system of government” that is also mentioned, passed to the rest of the western world where they have survived to the present as the concepts of specialisation and professionalism via Greece. This fact was acknowledged by: Herodotus, 440 BC (Book II); by Plutarch who names Lycurgus, “that law-giver of Sparta,” as the borrower of the said technique of governance from Egypt (Plutarch, 75 AD, “*Lives*,” Vol. 1, p 321, Perrin) and by Aristotle before him (350 BC) who conceded as follows:

“It is not a new or recent discovery of political philosophers that the state ought to be divided into classes, and that the warriors should be separated from the husbandmen. The system has continued in Egypt and in Crete to this day, and was established, as tradition says, by a law of Sesostris¹¹⁷ in Egypt and of Minos in Crete... the separation into castes from Egypt, for the reign of Sesostris is of far greater antiquity than that of Minos... Egypt witnesses to the antiquity of all these things, for the Egyptians appear to be of all people,

¹¹⁷ The 12th Dynasty Egyptian king, Sesostris I (who reigned 1962–1928 BC) is credited with the innovation of occupational specialisation mentioned here—chronology from MEE 98/16.

the most ancient; and they have laws and a regular constitution existing from time immemorial. We should therefore make the best use of what has been already discovered, and try to supply defects” (Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 7:10).

The views of David O’connor ([a], GME 1993) are pertinent for mention here too as he uses the word “owe” in relation to the debt owed to Africa by the west, and further corroborates the above:

“The civilisation of ancient Egypt is significant in several ways. Together with those of Mesopotamia, India, and China, it was one of the earliest civilisations, and it is perhaps the best example of continuous cultural evolution based on internal stimuli, rather than the complex mix of internal and external factors found, for example, in Mesopotamia. Egyptian influence on other peoples was also significant. Its hieroglyphic writing system and other cultural elements were adapted by ancient kingdoms of the Sudan. Syria-Palestine was strongly affected by Egyptian religion and art. And the cults of some Egyptian gods had followers in both Greece and Rome. The two last regions and the Bible are the most important antecedents of the modern western world that owe something to Egypt. The western alphabet is derived from a Phoenician one possibly modelled on Egyptian hieroglyphs; Egyptian ideas are found in some parts of the Bible; and Greek sciences and especially, art were originally influenced by Egypt.”

Appendix 3

James Massam's Kalenjiin Hieroglyphs Story of 1927, and the Ancient Egyptian Contribution to the Modern "Western" Alphabet

The statement in Chapter 3 to the effect that the Kalenjiin language has shrunk over the years owing largely to lack of writing needs some qualification. The word for "write" in both Kalenjiin and ancient Egyptian is one and the same *sir*. In the Kalenjiin context, this meant, in part, the drawing of pictograms that the British colonial administrator of early Twentieth century, J.A. Massam, referred to as *hieroglyphs*.

What Massam saw, and described, were sacred drawings that were used by Keiyo initiates but only during circumcision confinement. Those symbols had standardised meanings: depicting movement, love, wealth or the lack of it, etc. The male and female initiates, during an occasional meeting, being forbidden to communicate verbally, had to use these hieroglyphs to carry out conversation.

Each sex group was taught the sacred sketches in their separate areas of confinement in order to enable them to converse with the members of the opposite sex during the occasional get-togethers. Most of the writing was done on sand, or on ashes. "A girl may use these sand sketches to indicate the state of her feelings towards a suitor," wrote Massam (1927:72) of those Keiyo hieroglyphs that he observed in the 1920's.

Other Kalenjiin groups, the Kipsigiis included, used a special stick (a type of *sigilgilyoot*?) either additionally or exclusively for communication between "lovers" during the period of confinement. The stick resembles the standard walking stick without the hooked part (see the picture of the lady, Chapkwe, in main text, Chapter 2) but is slightly smaller. Symbols were scratched on it and darkened, or burnt black, against the golden background of the stick. Innocent little children, or trusted mothers on a mission, conveyed the *sigilgilyoot* between the lovers. The symbols were standardised so the lovers could correctly interpret each other's writing. Interception by wrong parties was forbidden by taboo.

As we have stated, the *sigilgilyoot* message stick has survived to this day, although it is used in a more limited and merely symbolic way. Mothers—mostly of the Asiis faith and of the culture that Asiisianism underpins—who are on a mission to find brides for their sons, often use *sigilgilyoot* as a sort of ceremonial walking stick. But the prospective bride's family will immediately know of the suitor's intention on noticing the stick, whether plain or decorated with the meaningless patterns of today. Since in the past the stick bore meaningful messages that were inscribed by

the proposing lover, the mother of the suitor, who conveyed the stick, was, therefore, just a messenger.¹¹⁸

Since in the olden days the stick would have been inscribed personally by the intending suitor, the modern mother's action of carrying and being seen to be carrying the *sigilgilyoot* stick, appears to be indicative of her son's desire for the girl in question. In retrospect, it would seem, therefore, that the prospective bride and groom actually took part in the selection of one another unlike some church-influenced oral historians who would have us believe that "heathen" parents arranged marriage for their children irrespective of the children's preferences.

The Kalenjiin also referred to decorations on the military shields, which conformed to the battalion symbols, or standards, as writing. Decorations on the walls of houses were also called "writing." To the extent of the examples cited above, therefore, the Kalenjiin concept of *sir* was not very different from that of the ancients whom they consider to be their ancestors. Sadly the Kalenjiin, however, did not store such written material. Consequently, the language, left to depend almost entirely on daily speech and the recollection by oral historians for its preservation; continued to shrink.

Today's alphabet-based writing is known to have come in this way: Greek letters were borrowed from Phoenicians who had, several centuries before, invented the same. The Phoenician inventors of the script had themselves been inspired by and actually based their invention on the much older Egyptian symbols. It has been claimed that the Semitic script owes its development to a Semitic-speaker—a Phoenician—who was working in an Egyptian turquoise mine in the Sinai Peninsula. He reworked the Egyptian Demotic script and developed a linear script that suited the needs of the Semitic language forms (Cf. Harris, 1971:262).

The Romans, on their part, adopted the Greek alphabet and re-introduced it throughout their empire which in its heyday spanned much of Europe.¹¹⁹ Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding Ethiopia) had later to learn the "Roman" alphabet through the former colonial subjects of the Romans: the British, the French, the Portuguese, the Belgians, and the Germans, etc. It has also been claimed that the Indian script was ultimately based on the Egyptian hieroglyphs via the same Phoenician (Semitic) route (Beals & Hoijer 1971:497). To the extent, therefore, that it is derived from the Phoenician alphabet, the Greek alphabet is Egyptian in ultimate origin, and, by extension, so is the Latin or Roman alphabet that we now use.

¹¹⁸ The author has not been fortunate enough to lay a hand on this stick recently. But he saw it in his younger days when the inscriptions then appeared to him to be mere arbitrary decorations. This tradition was maintained longer by Kalenjiin-influenced sections of the Maasai community. The additional piece of information is, therefore, owed to Mr. S. Lekakeny ole Koros of Narok, Maasailand, who was available for oral interview and follow-up regarding Maasai and Maasai/Kalenjiin customs between 1990 and 1997.

¹¹⁹ North-western Europe, in general, was Roman dominion up to the fifth century AD, while South-eastern Europe remained under Roman political influence until the fifteenth century AD—GME 1993.

In summary: the Latin alphabet is based on the Greek alphabet. The Greek alphabet is, in turn, based on the Phoenician alphabet. The Phoenician alphabet, in turn, owes everything to the Egyptian Demotic script. The ancient Egyptians had themselves developed that Demotic script from the more ancient hieroglyphs.

We have demonstrated that although the Kalenjiin in the East African setting did not possess the art of writing in the conventional sense—the art of writing being an essential defining characteristic of all that is ancient Egyptian—the concept was there nevertheless and was demonstrated by way of the temporary “hieroglyphs” on the sand. Fortunately, for us, this was witnessed and the fact documented by a British colonial officer working in Keiyo-land pretty early in the colonial history of Kenya. What is more important with regard to this comparative work is that the concept of encrypting and conveying messages by manner of “hieroglyphs” was present here at one time as it was in ancient Egypt. The presence of “hieroglyphs” here either gave hint as to the base of the more advanced permanently inscribed hieroglyphs of Egypt or indicated a deteriorating and disappearing art of hieroglyphs that was imported from Egypt.

Appendix 4

In the following Simplified Cognate words Table, the table is “termed” simplified in the sense that no less familiar scripts such as the hieroglyphs, Coptic script, Hebrew and Greek scripts, are used. The English words in column 1 are arranged alphabetically for ease of reference. The entries in column 3 are Egyptian/Coptic translations of the entries in column 1, while column 2 is composed of the Kalenjin equivalents or semantic approximations, and these are indicated where they are inexact but are considered good enough to clarify the idea. The spellings of the words in column 3 are as they were transliterated from ancient Egyptian/Coptic by the authors of the documents consulted. However, in some cases, the transliterations from the hieroglyphs had to be simplified further for the benefit of the East African layman. But at this late stage we ought to have gathered enough knowledge to appreciate that the true phonetic representations of the entries in column 3, ought to approximate the corresponding Kalenjin renderings in column 2. The major sources consulted in the compilation of this table are as follows:

Budge, Sir E.A.Wallis 1920. *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*. (First published 1920 by John Murray, London) Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1978.

Faulkner, Raymond O. 1962. *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*. Griffith Institute, Oxford.

Gardiner, Sir Alan 1927. *Egyptian Grammar, Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*. Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (first published, 1927).

Crum, W.E. 1939. *A Coptic Dictionary*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press.

Kalenjin Dictionary, C.C. Ng'elechei. Transafrica Publishers, 1979; Hollis A.C., 1909, *The Nandi Language and Folklore*, Oxford at The Clarendon Press; Distefano, John Albert, 1985, *The Precolonial History of the Kalenjin of Kenya: A Methodological Comparison of Linguistic and Oral Traditional Evidence*, UMI Dissertation Services, Michigan, USA and many miscellaneous Coptic Church documents and sermons.

Simplified Cognate Words Table

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
Multitude, a lot	ata (how many?)	ata
Building, a	koot	met-koot
abuse, curse	us	housh
add	tes	tasho
adjudge, swear oath	rwookyî	oork
all, whole	tugul	tiil, tir
and	ak, ago	avo
arrival	it-eet, it-uunet	hai-t
arrow	mwook (shoot w/ar.)	moki (arrow)
ask for	teep	deb, aitei
astonished, be	oroogen	ahrok keioo
autumn	iwoot (rainy seas.)	uiit
baby	cherereet	chrd
baby	cherereet	sheere
baptismal tank	ki-musaang'-it	pi-oms
be distant	uu (migrate)	ue
bed, couch	kitook-ut	hnkyt
beer	maiyeek	hemki
beer, wine	kuumiik (honey w.)	khnemes
beetle	kiptaruruut	kheprer
beginning, in the	een taai	khen tarchii
beginning of time	po taai	pauti tauî
beginning, in the	een tauneet	hen tehueite
belongs to	pa, po	pa, po
beloved one	nechamaat	netchem-t
bent, be bent	kwoolog	koolg
bird, kite	tariit	dryt, trii,
bird, kite	tariit	haliit
birth, give	sigiisyeet, sich	shishiu
birth, midwife	tuumisio?	tmesio
bless, praise	siim	ismu, sem
bless, hail to	sere	shere
blessed	naiaat (renown)	naiat
blessed	mogoryoot (rich)	makarios
blossom, flower	rur, rir	re hrîre
blue, the blue one	kiparus	khprsh
blue (garment)	aruus	artit
bowl, censer	kiis-yet	giis
brave	koony	kni
breast, bosom	kiina	kuun
bring hither, give	ibuu(n)	avei
bring hither	ibuu(n)	eine
Bull-God of Kamur	kamar	Ka Kamur
burial, prep. for	keesut	kiise
burial	keesut	koost

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
burn, kindle	nde ma(at)	ntehe nhomt
burn, be burned	lale	rehreh
call, speak	mwaaiite(n)	mute
canal	oino	hoone
capture, shut up	rat (tie)	reteh
capture, impede	kee-rat	gi rat
carry, to	ip	fai, fi
cattle, a breed of	teeta (cow)	thentut
cattle, young of	roor-iaat (fem.)	rer
cave, cavern, hole	keben-eet	khebai-t
cavern, hole	kereriit (grave)	qeri-t
chief of district	oorgoiyoot	ur-qahu
child	laakwa	aluu
child, monkey	mooso	msw
child, kid, chick	arwa	aru
child	laakweet	pkeket
choke, throttle	chech	oachit
claw, nail	siiyeet	sha-t
claw, nail	siiya	se, s-h
cold, be	us (be windy)	hs
come	nyoo(n)	nwy
come forward	nyoo(n)	nahoon
come	hu (marakwet)	ii
complain	i-nyony	enen
conclude, finish	rook-sii	arq
conclude, finish	rook-sii	oorq
conclude, end, destroy	porooch	poorg
concubine	syeet (co-wife)	hsyt
country	emeet	kemet
country	kora	kora
cover, be safe, saved	ituuch/tuch	tugo
cover, hide	tugeen (cover with)	tekhen
crush	petpet	ptpt
cry out	riir (cry)	rere
cry	riir	rim
cry of joy, merrily	ariririri	rirara
cry out	waach	uag
cry, raise up cry	tes wagaat	tashe oeish
cry aloud	waach/bol	oash ebol
cut down trees, etc.	swaach	shai
cut up, split	ton	tonn
cut, divide	chwaas	tches
cut up w/knife	sag-eet	seki-t
cut	tem	tem
darkness of night	keemoi	kmime
day	ra (today)	hru/ra
dead body, mummy	muusto	ma'at
dead body	muusto	ref-mout

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
death	meet	met
deceit, moral decay	keebet	khab-t
deceit	leembech	tenbekh
to deceive, deceive, go astray	itaam	tenem
deceive, utter lie	Keng'ool	gi-chol
deceiver, lie teller	-plembechwa	pla-ninug
deceptive, lying	kenu	nuug
defeat	par (in war)	boore
defile, spoil	suup	suuf
descend	keerek	khari
desire	cham	shemei, shaam
dew	rewoot	eioote
die	me	mu
dig	tem	tem(ii)
dig up	bol-uun	bolbl
direct, turn	ket (drive)	keet/ kiit
dispute, quarrel	tiyen	titoon
disregard	tai (disown)	htai
dream	rwootit	resu-t
dream	rwootit	rasuu
dress, swathe	ilooche	choole
drink, a	maiyywaat (plenty)	myt
droppings, crumb	soro-eek	srobreb
dry, make	soiyo (dry)	tshuiyo
dry, to be; be hard	keesai	kes
dry, be	soiyo (dry)	shoue
dry, be	keyaam	khem
dry, to	kelkeel (fry)	gelgel
dung, excrement	sorooi (dropp.)	sesher
dung, excrement	sik-yoot	soot
dwel, be estab.	meny, menyiiis	mn
dwel, remain, sit	meny, menyiiis	hmes
ear	iit, iit-in (ears)	aten
eat, swallow	am	am
eat	am	uoam
edge, end of garment	tapan	tap
enquire, investigate	kin	g[i]nu
enwrap, embrace	molooch	mul[u]j
estate, houses	pororyeet	pryt
even if	kaanda, ngaanda, kan	kan
evening	ruiyo (to bed)	ruuhe
evil	boon (witch)	boon
evil, enemy	buun	ban
examine, study	keer	ger
excited, become	baibai	ebeb
exist	sop (be alive)	shoop
falcon	psiichit	hashit

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
fall	-put	poht
fat, be	neraat	keniouut
fat, be	keener	kinne
father, elder	paiyoot/poiyoot	paiyoot
fear, dread	nyogooryo	nrw
heat	ooma (high temp.)	hummm
field, meadow	suuswa	soshe
fifth	-pa muut	mehtu
filthy one	samis	mhshs
finish, to	tar	tcher/ter
fire, put on; set on f.	kotkot	ti koht
fire, flame, burner	maat	m'hatti
float on water	lool peek	hloeile
floor for threshing	kenuut (mortar)	tchennu-t
food	amdit/amit	amit
fool, amaze	apus	pooshs
for ever	iinei (so much)	ench
fruit (of sycamore)	logo-eek (any fr.)	elkoo
garment, garb, dress	anga	unkh
garment -strip of	ngor-yeet	khara, gera
garment, a kind of	ang-eet	aggit
garment, to weave	ngor-yeet (garm.)	urit
glean	siiratik (stalks)	srat
glorified, be; raised	i-chaa	chas, chos
glorified, be	i-choi (flatter)	chas, chosi
glorified, be	i-choos (neg.)	chas, chosi
go away	uui	ui
go away, flee	rwai (pl.)	rwi
go on a journey	wa	aua
goat, gazelle	aar-teet	ar-t
goat (wild), ibex	no (goatherd)	nu
goat and small stock	neeko/neego	ankhu
God(dess) One	Netoroor (exalted)	neter ua
goose, "goose? god"	tariit (bird)	Ter-t
grave, tomb	kereeriit	kher
gum, resin	maang-eet	men-at
gum	temeniet (wax)	men-at (gum)
hair, locks of	suumei, suumeiyot	samut
hale, be hale	mice	miio
hand, give a hand	tooret (give h.)	drt
hand, give a hand	tooret (give h.)	toore
hand	e	e
hand	e, euut	toot
harvest, wield sickle	kes (harvest)	gi ohs
harvest, reap	kes	ehs
haste, fast	chechep adj.	chepi
hasten, be swift	chaak-ta	chakh, khakh
hawk, falcon	chesirereet (hawk)	tcher-t

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
healthy, be, whole	kaigai	ugai
heavy, become	nyigis-iit	nusht
here	yu	ea
hero, brave man	paar-iindet	per-a-hat
high, tall	kooi	koi
hillock, heap	tul-weet	tu, tol
hind of body	patai	fota
his mother	kameet	qemamt
homeland, country	kaa	kah
honour, pay respect	teech	taiiut
hood	chepkuuleet, kuulo	kukulila
horn	kuuino	koons
horn	kuiiineet	hen-t
house	koot	koot
house, temple	koot	khat
house (of great h.)	poror	pr-o
hungry, be h.	ru-guut	hkoeit
hungry, go h.	ru-guut	rout hko
hungry, be h.	ru-guut	hokr
I, myself	an-ee	anok
I, me	an-ee	an-ee
in front of	een taai	ha tihi
in house, homstead	een pii-yuut	hen pii
in e.g. in the name..	een	hen, khi
incline towards	riik	rek
indeed, verily	iman	hamiin
instruct	motir	mtr
instrument of iron	kariik	korks
instrument, weapons	karneet/kariik	khanre
jar, pot	soteet (gourd)	shoshu
jar for beer	soteet (gourd)	stt
jugular vein	korot (blood)	khroot
kick, blow	tyaar, pir	tbiir
king	oorgoiyoot	uuro
king's rep. governor	maootyoot	met ta
knife, sword	rootweet	chorte
know	nai	noei
lame, limp	kor (be blind)	gora
lame, lame	Ng'waale (limps)	chale
land, under corn	mbar-eet (farm)	neper-t
land of sunrise	egeet (sunrise)	ekht
land, arable	sooita (grassland)	shta
land, arable, pasture	oiy-eet (cult.)	hoi
laughter, in joy	een ureryeet (jest)	khen urashi
laughter, derision	rorechi (laugh at)	rashi
lean on	rueen/syep (lie on)	rhene
leaven	mermer-uuk	shemiir
leaven	musar (sour porr.)	seere

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
leaven	musar (sour porr.)	shemiir
length, height	kooi-ndo	qa-t
liability	pesen	pessu
lift up voice	waach	epshoi
light, be	usus-iit	asout
light, in weight	usus	as
like, it is like	uu	ue
likeness, form	kergee	khereb
likeness, image	itoon-da	tut
likeness, be like	ma-uu (unlike)	mau
little, small	nwach (short)	netch
loaf	kimyo	kmh
locust	preng'enyit	brukos (Grk?)
loins	suw-eet	s-wt
long, high	kooi	qai
look, behold	iroo, keero	ioorh
look at	soeen	soun
Lord's homeland	Kaakiptayaat, Kiptaa	Hakaptah
love, make	cham (love)	tcham
love	mai (desire)	mei
lover	mureet	merut
low lying land	keryo (valley)	khrw
magician great	oorgoiyoot	wr hk-w
man	chii	shi/zi
man, another	muren ake	ke rome
man	muren	rome
man, a	chiito	khat/chat
mankind, men	piik	p(e)t
many	chaang'	sho/she
marsh	saaos	ss
meal, supper	amisyeet	msyt
medicament, a	kerich-oot	kerit
medicament, herb	kerich-oot	ka-t shut
medicament, a	kerich-oot	khershu
medicament, herb	keet, keetiik	ketket
medicines, drugs	kerich-eek	pekart
menstrual cycle,	suneet	soont
midday	peet	pet
millet	baiywaat	boot
mix, gather together	tuiyeet (meeting)	tuth
mix, to	tuuyo	tooh
mix, meeting	tuiyeet	tuet
mix, host, invite gath.	tuum(iin)	toum
morning	tau(n) (begin)	tua
mother	iyoo	miiu
move in two direct.	keenasta (detour)	khns
mud, dirt	laktee(n) (throw m)	lagte
name, give	tau, toochin	tauo

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
name	kaaina/karna	ka
name	kaaina/karna	ren
namesake, your name	paakarna (namesake)	pekran
neck, throat	kaatit	khaaqe-t
neck	kaat	m'khaqt
negating particle	mo	mon
new	leel	leluu
night, darkness	keruitoos (in bed)	qerhu
night, during a	ki-nuuchi	en uushi
nose, nostril	ser-uut	sher-t
of	aap	ap
offerings	sak-oop-ei (bull sacrifice)	safkw
old, antique	yoos	as
open, be open	weny	wuon
ours	nenyoon	naaon
owner of	nebo	nebw
ox	ei	ehei
palm fibre	soosioot (palm tr.)	sooshiite
papyrus plant	taparaar-in (+-)	terbeiin
part, share	toi-yen	toie
path, way, road	oor-eet	her-t
pierce	toor, torator	tortor
pillar, idol	toloita	tuot
pine away	yaam	haam ebol
play	kergeren (neg.)	gerger
pleasure	seriit (excessive)	seherrit
poor, wretched	panan	ebiin
pots, vases	ter	teru
pound, tread down	taany	tano
power	kiim (powerful)	gom
power, become strong	koromiit	graeit
power	koroom (fierce)	tagro
power, find p.	kiim-iit	gim gom
power	koroom (fierce)	goore
pray, worship	soomseet (begging)	sh(o)msheet
pray, to ; to submit	keesa	kesa
pray, appeal, beg	soom	s-nemmeh
pray, beseech	soom	semsem
pray, adore, praise	saa	s-uash
pray, to bless	soom-soom (beg)	sem-sem
pray, grovel	ki-burbuur (dedi.)	hburbr
pray, supplicate, beg	soom (beg)	s-nem, smeh
pray, beseech,	teep (ask for)	tebh, tobh
pray, beseech	saisai	s-uash, saai
pray, serve, worship	soomseet (begging)	shemshi
pray, adore	saa	s-uaa
pray, appeal	soom	semi, smeme
pray, request, cajole	koros (prayers)	koorosh

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
pregnant, be preg.	tomoneet	teou, mentoo
present in midst	miiten een...	ti miite khen
present, is not pr.	momii	momon
present, in midst	miite	miite
procession, lead	soosimo (for rain)	sshm
rain	roopta	hru mpe
ran, I ran	aalapat	aipoat
recently	oiin	inhi
reckon, understand	isup	hsb
red/reddish brown	murwoon	mrosh
red-coloured	piriir	piirsh
reproach, be angry	tach (provoke)	tha
reproach, a fiery man	tagaat (is provo.)	ta kha-t
reproach, make angry	nereeksii	ernuchs
reproach, mock	nereech	nechnech
repulse, push,	toor-ten	tochn
repulse, drive away	teer	tchaari
resemble, be like	uu-ni	eine
rest, die down, fin.	keruuiyo (to sleep)	gerh
rest	muuny	manei
restrain, use force	teer	taar
restraint, oppression	ter-eet	taar-t
rich/great man	mogoryoot	ramaoi/goare
rise up	teel	toile
road, street	oor	heir
rob, seize	rep	terp torp
rob, plunder	choor	shersh
robber, plunderer	repiindet	reftorp
rod, staff	kirok	garob
rope, cord	aanweet	annu/ant-t
run	laapat	poat
sack, bag	abusagit	saq
salt	muunyeek	hmu
sanctuary, sky,	paarak	per-ur
save, redeem	sor	sor
scatter, disperse	ser	shr
scatter	ser	sar
seed, plant	miin (pkant v.)	miin
seek	cheeng'	shine
seize, to	nam	nehemmm
seize, to	keerep	kerf
send	i-yook-ten	uote
serpent, a type	masweet-iit	mesut
serpent "goddess"	ereenet (serp.)	Rnnwt
servant, handmaiden	ki-boit-yoot	ubait
serve	poiis-yen	pooshn
seven	tisap	sashuf
sheep, cattle, stags	keechir-ek (sheep)	chre/chire

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
shepherd	mestow-aat	manesou
shine, glitter	i-lyel	eiyeleiel
sick, unwell	mioni	shooni
sick, be	mian	men
sickness, pain	mianeet, miondo	men't
sit down	tep-ooten	temton
sit, stay	tep	hdb
skull	terta	teru
sky	parak	hapr
sky	parak	hrubibai
slaughter	kigeet	chotget
slay	kiis	kiis
slay	par	pars
sleep, pass night	ru	r-uushi
sleep, to	ru	hoor(up)
sleep	kitook (in bed)	nkotok
small (prefix)	ki-, kiy	khi
small	kiteen	ketit
speaker, announcer	maootyoot	mdwty
spear, dirk	ng'ot-it	makot
spear	mere (Maasai: sp.)	mereh
split off	paach	patse
sprout, grow	rut	root
stand up, arise	tonoon	toun
stink, to	chuustoi	erstoi
stone, hard s.	rwandeet	rwdt
stone, flint	koi	qeh
stone, become	rwandeet (rock)	ronoone
stone	koi	gagoo
strike	syaar	shaar
strike	masmas	mushmush
strike (to kill)	muut	muut
strike	maas	miishe
strike, knock	kal (provoke)	kolh
strike	maas	mash
such and such a man	muren aanum	nim n-rome
sweet, love	chamaneet	shumenrit
Syrian warrior	muren (soldier)	mryn
teacher, master	musaag-iindet	sakh
tell, inform	mwa	ma, ama
testicle	muguiyoot	goeit
thigh, foreleg	kupees (thigh)	khps
thing, object	kiit	khet
third, the	nepa somok	pimashom(o)t
this and that	aanum (so and so)	u nem u
this...	ni	nai
three	somok	shom(o)t
thus	unoo(n)	hi nai

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
tired, exhausted	ng'et	kha-ti
to me, here	ireyu	eroi
today	ra-uuni	hru pni
tomb	kereriit	khr
top up	i-sur	shoor
tower	toloi-ta (pillar)	mechtol
trample on	tiech	titi
trample, pressed down	tiechatiech	techtooch
tree, wood	keet	kht
tree, tall tree	keet kooi	kht koi
true	iman	ume
true, indeed	wei, ee	uwii
truly	een iman	hen ume
trust, believe	ian	nahte
trusted, believed	ianaat	enhaat
turtle ("god")	chep-koigoch-eet	qeq-ha
Underworld, land of	Turgui	ta ur
uraei, serpents	ereenet (serp.)	aererut
uraeus (sacred snake)	munyweet (a type)	mhnyt
vagina, vulva	kweet (north Kal.)	kt
vanity, futility	chilo	ch(i)lo
vege. poison	kelyo	klo
vegetation, eat greens	am iwootet?	uoam uotuet
vegetation, greens	iwoot-et?	uotuet
vegetation, herb	suuswo (grass)	shuushit
vegetation, eat	am suuswoot	uom shusheet
vegetation: raw, green	iwoot (wet seas.)	uot
veil, covering	koo-lig-eet	lik(i)t
vice, deputy, heir	rupeiywoot	rpe(t)
wake, raise	tonoosi	tunoos
walk, to, to go	kee-pa	khpi
war, violence	poor-yo	per-a
wash self, bathe	iuun-kee	siaaun
wash	iuun	ioo
wash hand	iwuun euut	eioo ntoot
watch over, guard	iroo	hereh
watch over, stay up	riip-iis	roeis
watch over, guard	soee(n)	su
water course, channel	aineet	an-t
weave, plait	nabeet (weaving)	nbd
weave	nabeet	nobt
what are they?	choon ko nee?	han u ne?
wheaten bread	kimyo/kimyeet	kamut
where?	ano	toon
which, what?	achoon	ash nhe
white	leel	alev
wind, force of	useet	swt
wipe away	puukte	boote/fote

English	Kalenjiin	Ancient Egyptian/Coptic
wisdom, prudence	saeet	s(e)t
wise, be	sai	s(e)i
wise man, counsellor	oorgoiyoot	erqu
witness	motir-yoot	mtr
word, news, inf.	logooi	logos (Grk?)
words of truth	mwaet aap imanit	metut ent maat
work, tasks	boi-t/poi-t	fai
work, tasks	boi-t/poi-t	ihibiwui
workers	ki-poitiinik	ebiaik
write	sir	sir, ser, sikh
write, decorate	sil-aa-sil	selsool
you	iny-eendet	ntth
you	iny-eendet	intotin
you	ok-week	ek

Glossary

This glossary is composed of the Kalenjiin words used in this book and in the author's other books of the same theme. Their translation into English is primarily contextual to their usage in these books although those translations may, in the majority of cases, be universal. The Kalenjiin words used in the various tables of this book, and which have been translated within those tables, are not repeated here, unless they were also used in other parts of text and are intended to complete a picture here.

Pronunciation Guide

The many dialects of the Kalenjiin language vary, one from the other, more in the spoken form than they vary in the written form. This is because the major linguistic aspect that sets apart the various dialects is merely the intonation and intonation is not indicated in the written form, at least not as yet. So the highly phonetised style of spelling used here may apply to the majority of the dialects. Although the examples used are drawn from the wider all-Kalenjiin lexicon and lore, they are largely based on the Kipsigiis dialect as point of reference, but for no reason other than that it is the dialect spoken by the author. The Kipsigiis dialect, in the written form, however, is more or less similar to the written forms of the dialects of Nandi, Samorr/Lembus Tugen, and Keiyo.

Written Kalenjiin employs the Latin vowels with their basic Latin values intact: a, e, i, o, u. Kiswahili also employs the same vowels, similarly assigning them their Latin values. But as for the spoken form of Kalenjiin, each of these vowels are pronounced in many different ways. Linguistic experts estimate that the Kalenjiin language has at least four ways of pronouncing each of the five vowels making up a total of twenty or thereabouts.¹²⁰ This would confront the reader with a truly nightmarish reading problem were it not for the ability to make out from context what the writer may have intended. A classic example that illustrates this problem so well is this combination of letters: *moeet*: this word, standing alone, could mean any of the following: a wound; a tummy; it did not grow; you did not refuse to give (it) out; and more! In order to get the picture more graphically, try reading this tongue twister: *moeet mooita ne moeet amun een moeet ne mii moeet*, “you did not deny (us) the calf that did not grow because of the wound in its stomach.” In this

¹²⁰ Bible Translation and Literacy (E.A.), in the Sabaoth lesson book, *Korooryo ku taay*, 1990.

tongue twister *moeet* is uttered four times, each utterance bearing a different vocalic intonation and meaning altogether. This problem does not exist for the Kiswahili readers because the five Latin vowels are adequate for that coastal Bantu language.

Kalenjiin speech generally elongates and accentuates the last, or the last-but-one, syllable in a word, e.g. *angeet*, *kemmeuut*. The long words, which are composed of more than two syllables, may contain elongated vowel sounds both at the beginning, or near the beginning, and on the last or the last but one syllable, e.g. *kaaptuguut*, *moroongoochik*, *soongoolyet*. That syllabic elongation is indicated here by the doubling of the affected vowel letter.

The doubling of vowels does not necessarily change their sound or quality; it is largely a matter of quantitative change. It is not a repetition of that sound, rather it is an elongation of it, e.g.: *itaam* is close in vowel sound to the English “charm,” while *sisiit* comes close in vowel sound to the English “repeat.” The double /o/ in *laboot* reads like the /ou/ in “fought” and not like the /oo/ in the English “boot.” Kalenjiin double /e/, which is very common, is read like the /a/ in the word “states” and not read as the double /e/ in “feet” of English. Kalenjiin double /u/ is read like the double /o/ of the English “food.” Kalenjiin double /i/ is read like the /ee/ in the English word “green.”

As for the consonants, the main problems lie with p, b, g, k, t, and d; the /p/ and /b/ of Kalenjiin are pronounced like some combination of the letters p,v,b; the lips do not quite come together in order to produce the labial plosive sound associated with English or Kiswahili. The Sabaoth Language Committee¹²¹ decided to omit letter /p/ altogether from written Sabaoth and resolved to use letter /b/ throughout to represent the approximate sound described above. The other speakers of Kalenjiin have not decided; but since in many cases a real /p/ is pronounced, it is used here in most of the words that contain that controversial sound, while /b/ is retained in some cases more out of long habit of usage than for being a reflection of accuracy of sound.

The letters /g/ and /k/ interchange in spoken Kalenjiin; if the first word in a spoken sentence begins with /k/ then the letter is pronounced as /k/; but if the same word comes at the end, or somewhere else in a spoken sentence, then it is pronounced as /g/, but provided it comes after either a vowel or /r/ sound: a /k/ coming after any vowel or /r/ sound must change to /g/ in spoken Kalenjiin; a /k/ that opens a sentence or that which comes after a consonant sound other than /r/ remains as /k/. No convention has been arrived at in respect of this and this compilation has taken into account the actual sound. But, that said, complete consistency is not actually possible here because of long habit of usage.

The letters /t/ and /d/ are interchangeable; but the fact is that Kalenjiin does not have letter/d/. What may sound like /d/ comes out if the word being uttered happens to come after the consonant sounds of /l/, /m/, and /n/ respectively. The resultant /d/

¹²¹ Bible Translation and Literacy (E.A.), in the Sabaoth lesson book, *Korooryo ku taay*, 1990.

sound is represented by letter /d/ here, where it occurs, in the spirit of phonetic spelling. The modern written Sabaoth has, however, by an orthographic convention, banished letter /d/ altogether from its alphabet.

The letter combinations /ch/, /ny/, /ng/, and /ng'/ are respectively pronounced as in: church, Kenya, finger and sing.

The author was a key member of the spelling editorial sub-committee that was assembled by The Davy Koech Foundation to work on the Kalenjin spellings to be used in the book *The Kalenjin Heritage* by Gerald and Burnette Fish, and it will be seen that the spelling system used here is very similar to that employed in the said book.

The Glossary

a- I (this pronoun precedes verbs, adjectives and adverbs involving self)

aaomon- Maa(sai) for "I pray," lately introduced by the laibon-oorgoiyoot from Maasailand; sometimes used during Kalenjin prayer sessions

aap- of (belonging to)

aap taa of before, of the beginning

aeng' two

ageenge one

aiik/oiik departed souls, spirits

ake another

akut/agot "the likes of," "likewise," used to create plural forms, e.g.; agot kwanda, "the fathers," or "the likes of fathers"; was previously restricted to qualify male gender nouns but now used indiscriminately

al buy

alak others, plural of **ake**

alamalaiik the messengers who worked under the mestowek, the assistants of the maootik, the king's locational representative

Aldai/Waldai the western section respectively of the original Nandi and Kipsigiis settlements; said to come from

"right turn!" or "change right" or "change direction," which was in reference to the old custom of turning back east a little if one had given off the appearance of migrating westwards; the direction west was associated with decline and death as it was in the manner of the setting sun; for a similar reason dead bodies were dumped or buried to the west of homes and strictly as the sun set or even after it had set, but never when it was in the process of ascending to the sky, i.e. never before midday

am eat

anee I, myself

ang'wan four

angeet a piece of cloth

angot "the likes of," "likewise" previously used exclusively to qualify feminine gender nouns but now used indiscriminately (cf. **agot/akut**)

anii I, myself (esp.; among Sabaoth Kalenjin speakers, see **anee**)

Anywa a kin group of the Kalenjin that is native to western Ethiopia

aomon Ngai I worship thee Ngai (from Enkai, Maa[sai] for the Deity), chanted in some Kalenjin prayer sessions of **Kaapkoros** (which see)

araap “son of...,” precedes all male names given during circumcision baptism; lit. “kid of”

araap “the path of...” also meaning “clan of” in some northern Kalenjiin dialects

araap Koogo “son of grandmother” the most popular post-circumcision name given to the son of an elderly lady through woman to woman marriage (see Kilaal maat aap orenyaan)

araap pei/oraap pei “water way” meaning the irrigation furrows associated with the ancient Marakwet irrigation furrows

araap Posubeen “son of young female” the post-circumcision name given to a son born to a girl who was barred from marriage by her family (see kiitunji toloi, keeraany)

arawet the moon, a month

Arror the name for the northern section of the Tugen, their dialect; a river in Marakwetland named so in the manner of **Jordan** of Palestine and **Kipchooryaan** of Kipsigiisland (which see)

artam forty

Asiis The main name for the Deity to the Kalenjiin; traditionally described in female gender terms, is omnipresent but has the sun asiista as “Her” chief symbol

asiista the sun

atum “I give birth”

Baal an ancient Semitic deity who was the lord of clouds; the deity was introduced to Egypt, hence the Kalenjiin root-word for “cloud” **bool-**

baibai is happy, is cheerful

baiywaat/paiywaat a single grain of eleusine, also a very large amount of eleusine

Bajud one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Tanzania

bar kill, especially an enemy; also used in its sense of “conqueror” as prefix to the new names of the old men who had been promoted to saintly status following a forest-bound rite: **Bar-Solai**, **Bar-Ng’etuny**, **Bar-Maasai**, etc., i.e., respectively: Conqueror of Solai (A Maasai chief), Conqueror of Lion and Conqueror of the Maasai

Barabaig/Barabaeek a major Kalenjiin branch which is native to Tanzania, the official Tanzanian government designation for the major sections of the Kalenjiin branches living in Tanzania, name can be traced back to ancient Egypt where it referred to one of the military clans of Pharaoh; the **Barabaig** share Tanzania’s Mbulu District with the Cushitic people called the **Iraqw**; a German social anthropologist, Merker, discovered, around 1900 A.D., that the Barabaig were originally of black Egypt; probably also ex of central Kenya where the present day inhabitants of central Kenya remember them in various traditions as the Barabiu

beek/peek plural for eleusine or any grain, flour

berber “is a fool”

berberyet foolishness, ignorance

Bianjid one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Tanzania

biyuut/piyuut a homestead, a large enclosure

bogol one hundred

boolda cloud (true root is **bool**)

booldeet a cloud

boreet the month-long forest-based secretive ceremony that elevated the oldest men of the community to a saintly

status, leading to the acquisition of a name that was prefixed by **Bar**, “conqueror” (this rite survived for decades deep into the early part of the colonial era in Keiyoland); also the very old women’s holy mass suicide (well pronounced in pre-colonial Kipsigiisland) (see **kesoom meet**),¹²²

Buluu the last of the Kipsigiis **Nyoongi** age-set’s subset; they were circumcised around 1916 when the colonial government was issuing work passes to the people; the Africans thumb printed on the specified spaces in the application forms and on the pass itself, using blue ink hence **Buluu**

Buradig one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Tanzania

chamaneet lover

Changen opero the senior most circumcision age-grade out of the three subdivisions of each of the eight Pokoot circumcision age-sets; the standard Kalenjiin age sets (**ibinda** which see) have three recurring divisions in Pokootland: **changen-opero**, **Ng’iru** and **Nimur**

Chebeet Cheebo Chemataw/Chebeetip Chemataw one of the many names for the Deity Asiis, especially among the Merkweet

Cheebeet/Cheepeet one of the many names for the Deity, Asiis means daughter of the day”; Girls born at midday are often named **Chebeet**

Cheemarus “the almost blue girl,” a name for **Cheeptaleel** (Asiis) at the mythical level; a girl who is so dark in skin pigmentation that she almost appears blue is nicknamed **Cheemarus**

Chee-mwei “the fugitive,” especially the boy who, with his mother, fled to Maasailand, was probably called **Le-mweiya** there where he rose to found a dynasty; either he or some of his offspring later came back to rule in Kalenjiinland

cheepkuinaaporr rainbow

Cheepo-Amuni/Cheepo-Namuni one of the many names for the Deity, Asiis meaning “Daughter of **Amuni** / **Namuni**

Cheepo-keelyen-sogool one of the many names for the Deity, Asiis: means “Girl of nine legs”

Cheepo-Ngolo one of the many names for the Deity, Asiis; means “daughter of **Ngolo**”- probably “daughter of the day,” from Maasai **engolong**, “the day”

cheepto a girl

Cheeptol one of the relatively more recent and smaller independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

chemargeet riots, chaos

chemeenyjo “the girl of the boys’ secluded initiation house” the term for a woman who was allowed to be present at all stages of the males’ initiation owing to her misfortune of being the only surviving sibling or having been born after all of her mother’s babies had died (see **keeyai** and **chepotiibiik**) an ingenious piece of innovation: this

¹²² A new baby boy was given a name prefixed with the particle **kip-**, was circumcised 15–20 years later and was then given a new baptismal name that was prefixed with the particle **araap**. After a long service as soldier and then a very long life as an elder, he was promoted through the **boreet** rite and his new prefix particle would be even more prestigious: **bar-**. In order of social esteem, therefore, we had: **kip>araap>bar**. However, the British colonial government abolished the **boreet** rite that led to the acquisition of the highest title **Bar** and such naming automatically ceased. The few men who still bear names that are prefixed with the **bar-**particle are only the reincarnations of more ancient ancestors who had earned those titles.

woman could come and report back so graphically, to her fellow women folk, the clinical condition of the boys who were healing in seclusion as no man could do it better owing to the obscenity of the words necessary to describe it! But she would not let out the real secrets relating to the men's rites

chemeriinik the female circumcision inmates

chemng'al said to be the original name of the Nandi

chemnyogaa a man's first wife, also called **chepkoree-kuutwo**, or **kerootyet**

Chemoosiit the ogre, an animal of folk tales that represents greed and evil; also called by northern sections of the Kalenjin **kaapkoamjit** or **kaapamjit**

chep a contraction of tie aap > tiep > chep, "girl of" which prefixed to most girls' childhood names

Chepamirchio one of the names for Asiis in the context of war Deity; **Mirchio** is "war" and Mars—hence "March"—being the Roman "god" of war and therefore source of words like martial, is an interesting coincidence

chepkaauiit a leather wrap skirt

Chepkoree-guutwo a man's first wife, also called **chemnyo-gaa** or **kerootyet**

cheplakweet a baby-sitter, also applied to any of a man's junior wives

cheplangeet a common descriptive name for leopard; lit. "tree climber"; most likely real name: **meliil** or **meril**

Chepleeng' a Kalenjin term referring to those of their own who traditionally, or owing to calamity, turned to agricultural economy e.g.; certain sections of Pokoot and many sections of the people of today's Keiyo/Marakwet County; many of these people had been practising very

sophisticated irrigation farming for centuries

Chepopkooiyo another of the many names for the Deity, Asiis; the giver of cattle and prosperity by the positive indication through a halo (with an opening) **kooiye**; the sun's halo is in the form of an archway, **oormariich** the symbol of a cattle-pen

chepotiipiik "the girl of the girls" refers to a man who, because of suffering multiple losses of siblings and has often neither a brother nor a sister has been allowed to be present at all the secret stages of women's rites, while all other males are barred; many of the chepotiipiik were "made" in the **kaaptiiryoon**, the girls' initiation compound; this means that because all of his preceding siblings had died, he was taken to the **kaaptiiryoon** as soon as possible after being born and spiritually "re-fashioned" (**keeyai** which see) there so that the evil eye may not recognise him! When they became adults they would be allowed to be present at all stages of the women's circumcision rite

chepsoogeiyoot the diviner/herbalist who diagnosed diseases, revealed the cause e.g.; the witch or evil eye that may have been involved and prescribed treatment and course of action

cheptabisyeet a tornado

Cheptaleel one of the many names for the Deity Asiis; name seems to mean "the white girl" said to be in reference to virgin **Cheemarus** (Asiis at the mythical level, see **Cheemarus**) who was dressed in white before being sacrificed for rain; but since different forms of the same name exist in many places in Africa among people who are distantly related to the Kalenjin, some other origin of name may have to be sought; could it have originally been Cheepo-Tel, "daughter of Tel," the Deity to most of those northern relatives of the Kalenjin,

or **Chep-taaileel**, “The Lady of good omens”? The early catholic missionaries adopted **Cheptaleel** for God in their Christian sense

cheptuugeet a dove (see **sorooryet**)

Chepunyei a nickname for a one-handed person” he who hides hand”; also nicknamed Kipng’et siyeet “he whose finger is cut (although the whole hand would be gone!)”

Chepyoseet aap tuum the lady of rites; the priestess of Asiis who conducts all the women’s secret-stage rites; public stages of women’s rites are presided over by **paiyoot aap tuum**, the priest of the village, assisted by the **Chepyoseet aap tuum**

cheraanyit a sewing machine

cherongo the direction “west”

chesawiil departed soul, spirit (usage largely confined to northern Kalenjiinland)

chii human being, man, person

chiito a man, a person

chonginieek the first to be circumcised upon the fresh calling of an **ibinda**; the eldest members of any of the age-sets, circumcised, ideally, within the first four years of the calling of a fresh **ibinda**

Chook/Sook one of the two largest sections of the Pokoot

choor bring down hurtling, roll down

chubiisyeet the cursing

Daragwajeg one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Tanzania

Ddo/Tto (see Tto)

Dororojeg one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Tanzania

een taait in front of, before

een/eeng’ the preposition “in,” as in “in the name of...,” “by means of...,” etc.

Eendo one of the small sub-ethnic groups that make up Marakwet sub-county; their dialect of Kalenjiin; the **Eendo** are noted for their marvelous indigenous irrigation farming technology

eeng’/een the preposition “in,” as in “in the name of...,” “by means of...,” etc.

ei hand

ei ox

eit-aap muget a ceremony that elevated the old men who had lived a righteous life into a saintly status on individual basis as compared to **boreet** which was collective; the wives of the men so elevated (to any social level), automatically assumed their husbands’ new status in society; demotion of a man, and therefore all his wives, was technically possible: e.g., if he married the daughter of a man of his own age-set a **maat** taboo

Elgon, Mt. a large volcanic mountain that straddles the Uganda/Kenya border and which is occupied by branches of the Kalenjiin people; name is a corruption of the Maasai way of saying “the Koony,” El Koony, the Kalenjiin sub-ethnic group that occupies part of the slope of that mountain

emeet a country, any of the original four autonomous divisions of Kipsigiisland: **Peelguut**, **Waldai**, **Puureeti** and **Soot**

emityoot one of the sacred trees

euut a hand

euut aap kaataam “the misleading hand,” i.e.; the left hand

euut aap taa “the preceding hand” i.e.; the right hand

Ghumbieg one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Tanzania; probably

ex of central Kenya where the present-day inhabitants of central Kenya remember them as **Ghumba**

Gisamjeng' one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters dwelling in Tanzania

him sky (Merkweeta)

hu "come!" (Merkweeta)

ibinda any of the eight Kalenjiin cyclical age-sets; in order of their occurrence every 15 years: **Maiina**, **Chuumo**, **Saawe**, **Koroongoro**, **Kipkooimet**, **Kaapleelach**, **Kimnyiigei** and **Nyoongi**; the Kipsigiis, Nandi, and the Tugen, have dropped, following major military misfortunes, one each: Kipsigiis dropped **Kipkooimet**, the Nandi **Koroongoro** and the Tugen **Maiina**; otherwise the age-sets were ideally eight and covered a periodicity of 120 years; many of the Bantu neighbours of the Kalenjiin adopted these age-set names along with the circumcision rite itself, which rite of passage conferred upon a participant the right to take the age set name that happened to be on call when he underwent it

ibwaat think, ponder, consider, recall

ililat the collective reference to the superhuman being or beings behind rain, thunder and lightning

Ileet ne Micee Benevolent Thunder as manifested in a rumbling noise (which brings rain and the resultant prosperity); together with **Ileet ne Ya** and Asiis, formed the heavenly trio—what may be called the trinity of Asiis

Ileet ne Ya Malevolent Thunder, the one that flashes frighteningly and could strike, kill or maim; this force also enforced punishments upon offenders and arbitrated in land disputes by scratching the earth in the direction of the lawful boundary, etc; together with **Ileet**

ne Micee and Asiis, formed what may be called the trinity of Asiis

ileet the lightning/thunder

ilyel flash! (order to lightning)

iman, "it is true," so be it! Amen

imanit the truth

Ingassana a kin group of the Kalenjiin that straddles the Sudan/Ethiopia border

ingotyaat a flywhisk either from the tail of a giraffe or from that of a wildebeest

iring'otit "breaker of the spear" the quick payment in form of a cow that a murderer delivered and tethered to the family altar, mabwaaita of the victim before he could be killed in hot blood; a form of injunction as this action forestalled all retaliatory action until talks were begun

Irong' a section of the larger Keiyo people

Iseimajeg one of the small Kalenjiin speaking clusters of Tanzania

isub follow, reckon, understand, obey

itaamaat "it is crooked," the opposite of **litit**

i-tuuch save for another day, spare

iyoo mother, used by children to address their mothers, and by the women folk to address: their mothers, mothers' age mates, mothers in law, senior most co-wife, and the priestess of Asiis

kaabagak a dreaded peculiar (imaginary?) stage during the male's circumcision that the Terik are reputed to subject their inmates to; if a man is described as *kiiwo tuum kaabagak*, "he was circumcised the **kaabagak** way," you are supposed to hold him in awe; this is a psychological teasing edge over other Kalenjiin men that the Terik men have

tenaciously held on to even in the face of a real threat of extinction and assimilation into their Bantu neighbourhood and into the Nandi identity respectively

Kaaberuur “the House of blessings” the name for **Kipkooimet** age set among the Eendo and Merkweeta of Keiyo/Marakwet County; the name **Kipkooimet** was substituted following a calamity which took place when a **Kipkooimet** age-set was on call

kaagibookta they have gone on the offensive, attack

Kaagimno one of the relatively more recent and smaller independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

kaa-giptaa(ityaat) the home of the Lord, leader; a similar word in the ancient setting gave Egypt its name

Kaagiptaiyaat/Kakiptaa a possible Kalenjiin rendering of the form that gave Egypt its name, roughly meaning “the place of Ptah”; the Greeks called it Kiptaios or Aegyptus; the Arabs Qibtiya; all are from Kiptaa or Ptah, the “leader,” “ruler” or “Lord,” in particular a one time ruler of Egypt; he was later deified (i.e. virtually elevated to a divine level)

kaagoobook they (the enemy) have come to attack

kaah/kaa Kalenjiin, Coptic, and ancient Egyptian for home, homeland, earth/place

kaa-in rektoot “that lower home,” meaning the ruling family, i.e.; the **oorgoiyoot’s** family

Kaamaama “the home or place of maternal uncles” the fond name for the Abagusii by the Kipsigiis; it acknowledges the fact that an inordinate number of the Kipsigiis families can

trace maternal uncles to Gusii country (**Kosobeek**)

kaameet his/her/its mother

Kaapamjit the ogre-kind (see **Chemoosiit**)

Kaaparagook “those whose home is the sky,” a nickname for the clan of **Kipasiiseek** because the sun is their totem

Kaaparak elevated land in relation to a neighbouring low land

Kaapkipkooimet one of the two divisions, called “Houses,” into which the eight Kalenjiin age-sets fall among some northern Kalenjiin communities (see details under **Kaapkoroo-goro**)

kaapkiyai/kayaaet the water-baptism stage of the circumcision rite

Kaapkoroo-goro one of the two divisions called “Houses” into which the eight Kalenjiin age sets fall among the Keiyo and the Merkweeta, Eendo, etc; the other “House” is **Kaapkipkooimet** (or **Kaaberuur**); under **Kaapkoroo-goro** are: **Koroongoro**, **Kapleelach**, **Nyoongi** and **Chuumo**; under the “House” of **Kaapkipkooimet/Kaaberuur** are the age-sets: **Kipkooimet/Kaaberuur**, **Kimnyiigei**, **Maiina** and **Saawe**

kaapkoros the place of prayer/now house of prayer

kaapkorosuut the altar that is erected at **kaapkoros** the day before the big day of mass prayers; the altar of Asiis that is to be found outside homes of traditionalist families, also called **mabwaaita** in Kipsigiisland

kaapseroiyoot of the serpent? A stick used for cursing in contrast with the **nogirweet**, which was used for blessing; both sticks were present in collective prayer and during other deliberations

even if the **kaapseroiyoot** was not going to be used

kaapsoguut “the place of leaves,” usually located at a point where paths met, passers by threw leaves into a designated dump before proceeding on their journey, especially following a general calamity within the locality; places that were so used in the past still bear the name although the practice has since been abandoned; but the equivalents imported from the west are, respectively, the laying of wreaths of flowers on the tomb of the unknown soldier or on a departed dignitary’s tomb, the signing of the book of condolences and the sending of condolence cards to the bereaved

kaaptiiryong’/kaaptiiryoon the enclosure or compound and the main house occupied by girl circumcision inmates

Kaaptuguut the small house built near or within the cattle kraal and occupied by young men who guard the cattle

Kagipooch one of the ancient major independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

Kalenjiin the collective ethnic designation for an eastern Africa people who were previously pastoralist, term also applies to their Hamitic language; the root of the word is /le/, “utter”

kamar a bull whose horns have been artificially bent (see **kibir kamar**) and which constitutes much emotional and spiritual pride of its owner

kamas the intervening area between the highlands and the lowlands in Tugenland (also see **Kamasia**)

Kamasia a widely used nickname for the Tugen during colonial days; there are many theories as to its origin but the

most plausible one is that it is in reference to the Tugen geographical term for the intervening area between the highlands, **masoop**, and the lowlands, **sooi**; the Tugen called that area **kamas**; the Maasai called the Tugen Il-Kamasia and the British colonial government took it from them

kambageet a war dance, a demonstration, also the dance after the prayers of **kaapkoros**

Kameliilo one of the ancient major independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

kaniiseet a church, from Kiswahili < Arabic

Kapchemutwa a section of the larger Keiyo community

Kapchepkeendi one of the ancient major independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

Kapsiile one of the ancient major independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

Kapsyoondoi one of the relatively more recent and smaller independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

Kaptaalam one of the ancient major independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

Kaptumoiis one of the ancient major independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

Kapyaanga one of the ancient major independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of

Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

karaas rib

karaasta a rib bone

karneet a name, especially a name given during **kuurseet**; also a weapon, a metal

karoon/kariroon morning, “in the morning,” tomorrow (Kipsigiis)

Kasaneet one of the four Kipsigiis hereditary military regiments; the others are: **Kebeeni**, **Kipkayge** and Ng’etunyo

kata thorn

kayaaet/kaapkiyai the water-baptism stage of circumcision

kayandaaet the singing of circumcision inmates

ke Kalenjiin/Coptic/ancient Egyptian for self, soul

ke stomach entrails

Kebeeni one of the four Kipsigiis hereditary military regiments; the others are: **Ng’etunyo**, **Kipkayge** and **Kasaneet**

keeldo a leg

keelusta to go to spiritual waste, an equivalent of the Christians’ “to go to hell”

keepa siew the act of committing collective holy suicide by the very old members of a community (see **keesoom meet**, **poore**)

keepa to go, to walk

keeraany to stop someone or something from proceeding to do something or go somewhere; also to bar a girl from getting married, instead re-adopting her (see **kiitunji toloi**)

keeser to scatter, to dispel, to disquiet, to drive away in a disorganised way e.g. of enemy after his defeat

keesoom meet to pray for death; this is what the very old women who went to commit mass suicide over cliffs described their mission as; this brave way of meeting their death instantly elevated them to a saintly status and their souls were immediately recycled by reincarnation through newborns; the urge to be reincarnated was very strong among the Kalenjiin and its attainment was equivalent to the Christians’ “going to heaven” (see **boreet** and **poore**)

keeyai to be fashioned, made, done; also the spiritual re-making of babies whose multiple preceding siblings had died; some of such male babies were remade in the girls’ initiation enclosure in the presence of the initiates and were, after their own initiation, for the rest of their lives allowed to be present at all stages of the females’ circumcision rites, being referred to as **chepotiipiik**; baby girls from similar condition of family misfortune were spiritually re-fashioned at the secluded boys’ circumcision residence, **meenyjo**, and were thereafter, after their own initiation, and for the rest of their lives, allowed to be present at all the male’s initiation stages; such a woman would be termed **chemeenyjo**, “the girl of the boy’s seclusion house”

Keiyo one of the larger sub-ethnic groups of the Kalenjiin community, their dialect of Kalenjiin; the Keiyo are to be found in large concentrations in Keiyo/Marakwet, Uasin Gishu, and Trans-Nzoia counties; Keiyo is also the word for “valley” which, in view of the extensive Kerio Valley, which forms part of the Keiyo homeland, should explain the source of the name Keiyo although undaunted by its unsurpassed plausibility, various people still give many other theories of the origin of the name

keleelik ostrich eggshell beads which are in the shape of washers and strung together by leather string

kelumda songooliet to plant an ostrich feather, **songool-iet**, on the ground, being either a sign of surrender or magnanimity in battle; on the planting of this feather, the fight stops

kemelyeet a sacred shrub

kemmeuut a famine

kerebeet another word for **kiisyet**, the woven food bowl

kerio the Egypto-Kalenjiin word for “valley”; as in many other Egypto-Kalenjiin words with a diphthong the /ɾ/ may give way to /i/ or /y/, as in this case **kerio** (ancient Egyptian **khrw**), becomes **keiyo** as one comes further south of the Kerio Valley; other examples of such word behaviour are: **kaaina**, “name” from Egypto-Kalenjiin **karna**; **ai** or **yai**, “do”, “make” which ancient Egyptian and modern Marakwet have as **ir**

kerootyeyet a mans’ first wife, also called **chemnyogaa** or **chepkoreegutwo**

kes harvest

kesegeet a filter made of **taaparaaryet** or some other grass fitted to one end of the beer drinking straw

Kesiirto to go yonder, to pass by, to die

kesit a bird’s nest

ket drive, repeat, go back

keteetch to build, construct; to respect; to honour

kibananiaat a poor man

kibir kamar said of the bull whose horns have been artificially bent, usually one forward and the other to point backwards; still a popular young men’s pass time activity among the northern

Kenya Kalenjiin people, especially among the Arroor Tugen and the Pokoot; a strong spiritual and emotional bond develops between the bull and its proud owner

kiboogeet a whip (from Kiswahili **kiboko**)

kiboreetiet the designated leader in a file of initiates, the most prestigious position decreed during the establishment of the permanent order of sequence, **roopeet**, this being the last open ceremony before entering the restricted “house of birth rites” **koot aap tuum** into which the candidates and only those who have been initiated in the same manner may be allowed

kiim ole kiim!, or **king’ ole king’!** “firm say firm!,” a popular opening and closing line in collective prayer sessions, and before and after meetings; this line of Kalenjiin words is reportedly also used by the Meru elders of **Njuri Ncheke**, the Meru equivalent of **boreet**

kiimargeteet to chase someone or something in such a way that the pursuer and the pursued run in a disorganised manner but very fast

kiing’eet Asiis “to wake up Asiis” to draw the attention of Asiis, the Deity, to the birth of a baby during the ceremony of **Kuurseet**, when the new-born is recognised as the reincarnation of a departed relative; to dedicate the baby to Asiis

Kiingo the famous patriarch of the **Myoot** who is said to have been left behind in Mt. Elgon, under the care of Mt. Elgon Kalenjiin as the rest of his children dispersed to their present-day abodes

kiirwogiindet a judge, administrator

kiirwogiindet neoo the chief judge, the president of the council

kiirwook council, deliberation

kiiskiisik plural of **kiisyet**, the woven food bowl

kiisur supeereet “to pump the **supeereet**,” top up the soldier’s ration bag in preparation for a distant expedition

kiisyet a food bowl woven from shreds of the plant **taaparaaryet**, similar in use and name to papyrus

kiitunji toloi “married at the pillar,” the re-adoption of own daughter in the absence of a son by a family so that she may procreate in the name of the family; the “marriage” into the family takes place at the central pillar of a home because the “bride” does not leave the home

kii-tuun “long, long time ago, it so happened that...” the favourite opening line for story tellers

Kiituur a popular nickname for a boy who is a second re-incarnation of a soul that had earlier been re-incarnated by a woman through the birth of an older son but who died in childhood; a second attempt at re-incarnating a departed soul; for example if a righteous, successful man called **araap Barsiele** dies, and a boy is born and named after him, that boy will be called “**araap**” **Barsiele**; but if this boy dies before he is initiated, his mother can once again name one of her subsequent sons “**araap**” **Barsiele**; but because this is only the result of a second try, the new son will go by the nickname **Kiituur**, but all was subject to the calling-out rules of reincarnation called **kuurseet**

kiiwaalgee to swear by something one owns, esp.; cattle or to swear by one’s clan emblem (totem) or by one’s ancestors and their achievement; also to praise self for achievement by way of property acquisition, i.e., blow one’s own trumpet (done at the right time this was

desirable as it got the men working hard to acquire property by way of cattle, but any other item of property could be substituted given the changing circumstances)

kiiya peek “the grain is being cleansed/baptised,” done by women at the river after a harvest, or after a prolonged drought by way of praying for rain; also after a major calamity

kilaal maat aap oreenywaan rekindling the torch of the clan: used of a woman who because she has not born a son, has opted to “marry” her own wife who will bear children (at least one son) on her behalf; the philosophical family torch, **maat**, was carried by the males

kimaaita “the late,” a deceased person, but nowadays carelessly used to refer to someone you wish dead even if only in jest

kime-ke-yaat an evil-hearted, jealous good-for-nothing person; lit. “the one whose soul, **ke**, dies” (at the sight of something or someone good that does not belong to him which he may then seek to harm)

kimiit become strong; to emphasise, to remember to always do; this is the “do” of the “dos and don’ts” English equivalents; the “don’t” of the same is **ma-kikimiite**

Kimng’oroor one of the relatively more recent and smaller independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

kimonyjoguut a symbolically important wooden rod that sticks out of the apex of a circular conical house

Kimugoon the common name for the Pokoot among other Kalenjiin said to come from mugoon, “corks” in reference to the lip-cap which old Pokoot used to

cork up the holes that were pierced under the lower lip with; others say mugoon is in reference to a peculiar cap that the Pokoot used for closing their gourds

kimugusi rinderpest, a highly contagious cattle disease

kimusaang'it a confessional/baptismal “box” used both in circumcision’s “house of birth rites,” **koot aap tuum**, and during the river-based water baptism

kimuut nape (back of neck)

kimyeet cereal porridge made stiff to appear like a loaf

king’ ole king’ see **kiim ole kiim**

kip particle prefixed to most boyhood names and may be a contraction of **kiy pa** or **kiy aap**, “little thing of...”; parents of a newborn baby boy belittled their fortune—in order to cheat the evil eye—by calling the baby a little thing of this or that time of day or night, or of other circumstances of the time of birth such as famine, rain, etc.

Kipasiiseek a Kalenjiin clan whose emblem is the sun; traditionally regarded as the original priests’ clan; it is significant, in this connection, that their emblem is the sun, **asiista**, which is the chief symbol of the Deity, Asiis; this clan is one of two thought to have been first to enter Kipsigiisland; the other one was **Kipsamaeek**; the other name for **Kipasiiseek**, **Sootik**, lends force to the argument that they were originally predominant in **Soot**, the old southern division of Kipsigiis which still goes by that name although Bomet has now superseded it

Kipchooryaan/Pchooryaan a symbolically important river which the Myoot crossed in order to enter the present Kipsigiis country; they then circumcised the young and the not-so- young at the Hill of Circumcision nearby and

performed the river baptism, **kayaaet**, on this river; the hill goes by the names: **Tulwaap Monyiis**, **Tulwaap Laagoi**, **Tulwaap Ng’eeitiik** or, more popularly, **Tulwaap Sigiis**; the root of **Kipchooryaan** is **choor**, “roll down,” which is similar in meaning and sound to **joor** of River Jordan, or Yordan, of the Middle East; note the curious coincidences in the respective settings: the biblical Middle-Eastern Jordan also served as a river of baptism in the neighbourhood of Araloth, the Hill of Foreskins (Webster’s Old Testament, Jos 5:3), the Hill of Circumcision, also called Gilgal (Joshua 5:1–9)

kipeelpany “the meat roasters” these were the soldiers out-of-form, or the known cowards, whose role was to cook for the combatants while in transit; is a fitting Kalenjiin word for the Kiswahili **mtu wa mkono**, the artisan’s helper

kipiisyo “the sprinkler (or sprayer),” “the one who blesses,” a popular name for the priest of Asiis, the **paiyoot aap tuum**

kipire peek “beating the waters,” swimming, men ritually beating stones together at the river during prayers for rain or after a major calamity

Kipkayge one of the four Kipsigiis hereditary military regiments; the others are: **Kebeeni**, **Ng’etunyo**, and **Kasaneet**

Kipkooskee/Chepkoooskee boy/girl nicknames respectively given to babies that do not sneeze voluntarily to acknowledge a departed person’s name during **kuurseet** naming ceremony, and are made to accept a name after an inducement to sneeze; nickname means “he/she who rejects self, or rejects own identity,” and usually sticks and is popularly used in place of the reincarnation name, **kureneet**, given after inducement to sneeze

kipoieet a soldier’s leather garment

Kipsamaeek a Kalenjiin clan whose emblem is the lion (although they are generally not regarded **Talai**); the **Kipsamaeek** were traditionally given the role of cursing, a noble role otherwise, because evil must be cursed; as it was the role of **Kipasiiseek** to bless, it was theirs to curse when it became necessary

kipsaruuryaat neoo the chief judge, the council president

Kipsigiis ko ma sigiisyo: seguut! Translates to, “For the ‘people of birth’ (Kipsigiis), it is not the siring that counts: it is the wedding ring!” This obliges husbands to accept children that are born out of wedlock, e.g.; children brought forth by an estranged legal wife whether or not she has come back to him

Kipsigiis the largest sub-nation of the Kalenjiin people of eastern Africa, the majority of whom are to be found in Kericho and Bomet counties of Kenya, among other counties within the Rift Valley region of Kenya, the dialect of Kalenjiin that they speak

kipsiitait a toothbrush

kipsiricheet a rhinoceros

Kipsongoiyaat a senior bachelor (a negative term, so horrible sounding to the ear that most such men immediately arrange to get married the moment they get wind of a rumour that the term has been applied to them behind their backs)

Kipsorooi a mythical character who plays a similar role to that of the biblical Moses, complete with a rod with which he could command rivers to stop and leave a dry bed over which his own people could flee from enemies who were in hot pursuit

Kipsuunde nepo oeng’ the second offering after the harvest; the name for one of the twelve Kalenjiin months

kiptaaiyaat neoo nepo murenik the grand commander of the army

Kiptaaiyaat/Ptaaiyaat ruler, leader of men, captain, army commander, etc; now refers mainly to Jesus Christ and God in the notion “Lord” as it applied to Ptah of ancient Egypt (see **Kaagiptaaiyaat**)

Kiptaamo First month (the month of planting) of the old Kalenjiin year; in **Peelguut**, (northern Kipsigiisland) **Kiptaamo** coincides with March; this is the full **Peelguut** calendar beginning from the western January equivalent: **Mulgul, Ng’otyooto, Kiptaamo, Iwoot kuut, Maamuut, Paage, Ng’eiyeet; Rooptui, Puureet, Epees, Kipsuunde netaai, Kipsuunde nepo aeng’**

Kiptaru (kibolgoong’) the second wave of initiates after **chonginieek**; the **kiptaru** grade were, ideally, initiated from the fifth to the eighth year since the fresh ushering in of an **ibinda**

kiptildilyeet a wood-pecker; it is an important bird of omen, **tarteet**

Kiptilgariit “those cut off by the train” refers to the Kipsigiis **Nyoongi** age-set’s sub-set that was circumcised around 1900 AD when the railway line to Kisumu was constructed across Kalenjiinland, in the process erecting a real boundary between the Nandi and the Kipsigiis and between the Tugen and the Kipsigiis respectively

Kiptoiyoot/Kiptaito a young bull, but often refers, loosely, to the youngest man around; however, the **kiptoiin** (plural), strictly speaking, constituted the last wave of initiates who then close an age-set; i.e., they were the last to be initiated before a fresh age-set, **ibinda**, was opened; they came after, in order of seniority: **chonginieek, kiptaru** and **tetagaat** and, ideally, were initiated between the thirteenth and the fifteenth year since the commencement of their age-set; often unlucky fellows who served for too brief a period in the army

as the whole **ibinda** was soon afterwards to be retired from active service in deference to a fresh **ibinda**; because they were retired too young, they would often join the new soldiers of the **ibinda** junior to theirs, informally, training the others on active warfare, but also doing the despised chores such as the rounding up and driving away of raided stock, and roasting meat for the soldiers; the latter were the roles of **pirtiichik** and **kipeelpany** respectively, otherwise the preserve of the out-of-form or cowardly soldier!

kiptusweet the wild cat, an emblem of a clan; the Kalenjiin equivalent of Moses is said to have come from the **kiptusweet** emblem clan, **Kaapchemuri**

Kip-yegen the clan whose emblem is baboon; the old word for “baboon(s)” may have been **yegen**, judging from the coincidence of this name and the Maasai word for “baboons,” **oyegeny**; the common Kalenjiin name for the baboon, **mooseet** seems to have been a euphemism as **mooseet** seems to have been the original word for “child” as indeed it is still common among some Kalenjiin speakers such as Pokoot; in support of this argument: the smaller relative of baboon, the vervet monkey and most other species of the tiny apes, are called **cherereet**, which also means “a baby,” the human baby

kir embargo, quarantine

ko-iis “and bloom/prosper” from eating something blessed

Koilege one of the relatively more recent and smaller independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary

kolooiyo to heal, said of wounds

kong’asiistaap lang’at the direction “west,” properly called **cherongo**

konom fifty

konomoonik icons in a negative sense, idolatry

kookweet the village council, the village; the smallest administrative geographical unit in a district

kooligeet a woman’s leather shawl

koomda a specially but naturally shaped calabash that is the **paiyoot aap tuum**’s official staff of office—hence his other name, **paiyoot aap koomda**

koong’asiis the direction “east”

kooreet the land

koorgaap sigiis “the woman of births” the official midwife

Kooriis cold, wind, the mysterious power behind the wind, **kooriisto**

kooriisto the wind, the cold

koot a house, a building

koot aap tuum “the house of birth rites,” the officially designated house in which the key initiation rites are performed; here the circumcision initiates symbolically enter their death on the circumcision eve and triumphantly arise and come forth as adults born again on graduation day; the **koot aap tuum** may be referred to as such when it hosts other kinds of rites because all rites lead to the “birth” of the individuals involved into the next higher social grade

kootaapchii from **koot aap chii**, “the house of someone”; also means the small sub-divisions of clans whose founder can still be remembered and in many cases the members thereof can reincarnate souls from any of the departed relatives within it

koremeerik the constellation of the Pleiades; the traditional astrologers studied the behaviour of this constellation

of stars and when the auspices were right, advised the people to plant

korgoop tuum “the lady of birth rites,” another name for **Chepyoseet aap tuum**, the priestess of Asiis

korla “at this time”; one of the words containing the old word for the sun *ra* or *ri* e.g. **kariroon** (morning) and *ra* “day,” *ra-ini* “this day ‘today’,” *abakora*, “day in day out,” “repeatedly”

koros/koroseek prayers, also the sacred plants of prayer when put together for the purpose of a prayer session or ceremony

koros-ep bar prayers said on opening virgin land for cultivation (Merkweet)

koros-ep kyak prayers for blessing of cattle (Merkweet)

koros-ep rop prayers and offerings for rain (Merkweet)

kosisiitiet one of the sacred trees

Kosobeek a standard, detached name for the Abagusii Bantu-speaking people all over Kalenjinland (see **Kaamaama**)

koyumgooi the initiate who brings up the rear in the file, the second most prestigious position in the line-up, after the **kiboreetiet** (which see)

kuregee ooi “they reincarnate one another’s departed souls, (ooi)” meaning that the families being spoken of are so closely related that one departed member of one family can be reincarnated in another through **kuurseet** baby-naming ceremony

kureneet a person named after a departed soul is called the **kureneet** of that spirit (see **kuurseet**)

kurmonuutiet the beaded hemming of a leather garment

Kurut a section of the Keiyo people

Kutipkiina lit. “language of the breast,” meaning “mother tongue”

kutuny kneel down!

kuumyaat a drop of honey

kuurseet the calling out of departed *paternal* relatives’ names to a new-born baby; at some point, as the names are called out, the baby sneezes and the name upon which it sneezes is given to it; the panel of women whose duty this is, believe that the sneezing is the baby’s acknowledgement of the fact that it is the departed relative—whose name is called out at that instance—come back to life again, i.e., reincarnated; the root is *kuur*, “call,” meaning in this instance that a departed relative was being recalled back to life on earth, i.e., reincarnated, by the instrument of the newborn baby

kwaneet a single file of soldiers, a queue

kwilkwiilik families from the Talai clan that are so far removed from the centre of power that the people regard them “harmless”; these are members of the Talai clan who trace their ancestry to dynasties that have since been overthrown or otherwise eclipsed over time and all they have now to show for their days of glory is their family emblem, lion, and their family **kootaapchii** name; because only one man inherited his father’s power within any of the **oorgoiyoot**-ruled jurisdictions, it followed that the less fortunate brothers and cousins would raise families that would in later generations be further removed from the center of power and thus progressively become **kwilkwiilik**

kwoony woman, wife, especially after her first childbirth in the olden days, otherwise a wife remained **murereet**, “bride,” “sweetheart,” until her first childbirth

kyeet the universe, the cosmos, the world; often heard in the saying:

“ngoeekta **kyeet** kubeestaap koorgo,” “may the dawn find the world in the lap of woman,” i.e., may the next day find the world in peace, as women were associated with peace and tranquility, fertility and creation—hence the philosophical assigning of the Deity figure, Asiis, to the feminine gender

labotweet the Sodom’s apple plant, one of the sacred plants

laitor-yaat the ruler, the leader; compare **laitor** with “leader”!

lakam the geographical term for part of the inhabited area between the highland and the Valley in Keiyo; also a Kalenjiin word for “slope”

leel white, new

legetyeet a woman’s wide leather belt which was used to hold the baby in place in the womb and to tighten the tummy soon after giving birth, which action ensured that she regained her original shape a short while later; protruding tummies were frowned upon unless one was pregnant; **legetyeet** was also the chief symbol of a woman’s sanctity and authority; it was also a last-resort instrument of prayer in times of a crisis involving a sick person; what would be similar to the Christian “last rites” (although here there may have remained a lingering hope) was keesa legetyo, “to worship (with) the **legetyeet** belt”; a woman could also stop combatants from fighting by merely offering to produce her **legetyeet**

Lem/Lemeek a corruption of the Maasai Il-meek, which is in turn from Kalenjiin **meek**, “the agriculturalists”; this to the Kalenjiin refers mainly to the Luhya and Luo of western Kenya; to the Maasai it refers to all agricultural peoples except those whom they consider to be one of their own, or closer to them in supposed esteem, who turned to agriculture latterly

owing to loss of cattle; these ones the Maasai call Il-Lumbwa

Lembuus a section of the Tugen to the south of Tugenland

lemeiyweet one of the sacred plants

likwoop another way of saying **lipwoop**; pristine, virgin, wholesome, righteous, ritually unpolluted, unblemished

lipwoop/likwoop ritually unblemished, of a righteous person, of a sacrificial animal that is of a uniform plain-coloured coat throughout the body

litit something straight = opposite of **itaamaat**

lo six

Loontiyani Maasai language meaning “of the bamboo,” which was corrupted to Londiani by the British colonial officers

Lote/Loten the eponymous father of the **Myoot** according to some traditions

lugeet an army, a war, a raid

Lumbwa a widely used derogatory nickname for the Kipsigiis during colonial days; it is from Maasai Il-Lumbwa, a name the Maasai give to their own who have turned partially to agriculture; name also refers to the agricultural Maasai section of Arusha, Tanzania, also known as Il- Arusa

lus get lost spiritually

lusta be lost/wasted spiritually

luuleet naturalisation, conversion, or adoption by conquest, or by choice of a non-Kalenjiin by a Kalenjiin family; same as **ng’woseet**

maama a maternal uncle

maanyuun a popular term of address to one related in any of the **maat** ways (see **maat**)

maasop “did not live,” used in the olden days of the baby born of an unlawful union that had to be suffocated before it cried, which if it did, it had lived; now commonly means “he/she/it did not survive,” “did not recover,” etc.

maat fire, a relationship term for paternal relations, circumcision mates, age-mates, members of one military regiment, **poryeet**, all of whom have to observe specific rules, ethics, and obligations to one another and to one another’s close relations; in ancient Egypt such code of behaviour was embodied in a conceptual “goddess” of righteousness called Maat

mabwaaita the altar of Asiis at **kaapkoros**, also called **kaapkorosuut**; the altar of Asiis that is to be found standing on the compound of every traditionalist family’s home, often erected especially during one of the religious ceremonies

Maiina one of the eight age-sets of the Kalenjiin (see **ibinda**)

ma-kikimiite “it is not to be emphasised,” said of a “don’t,” or of something undesirable

Mang’orori the collective Kenya-Kalenjiin name for all the Tanzania branches of the Kalenjiin

Mangadg: one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Tanzania

maootyoot the king’s messenger/representative, a very influential official during the reign of the **oorgoiyoot**

mat- “don’t!,” also introduces all teachings of the “don’ts” of the code of conduct (see **maat**)

Mbai a Mt. Elgon, Uganda side, Kalenjiin sub-ethnic group that falls under the collective designation, Sebei, of Sebei District, Uganda

Meek a Kalenjiin general term for all agricultural peoples as opposed to the pastoralists; the Maasai used the same term in the form **Il-meek**, which the Kalenjiin then re-borrowed and corrupted to **Lemeek**

meenyjo the house located a distance away from the general population and set aside for the male circumcision inmates

meliil the real name for “leopard” but which is rarely heard as most people use the name **cheplangeet**, “the tree climber”

meny, dwell, live in

meril leopard (see **meliil**) as pronounced by some northern Kalenjiin people who must change one /l/ sound where there are two in a word and separated only by a vowel sound

mestoweek the shepherds; also- the assistants of the **maootyoot**, the king’s messenger/representative

Metkei a section of the larger Keiyo people

mian be ill

miin plant (v.)

moeet stomach, stomach entrails

momoosiet a belt upon which rows of cowries were added as its (woman) owner graduated from newly initiated (one row) to great grandmother (four rows); the completion of four rows would signify that the grand old lady was now a great grandmother and that her great grand children may associate with her paternal relatives, also of the great-grand-children level, to the point of marriage without risking the taboo of incest

moogisich “was not born,” an outlawing declaration for habitual offenders who were then executed after his /her own clansmen threw a leaf at him/her; also means he/she/it was not found

moran a Maa(sai) word for a young man, men in arms

moroongoochik the circumcision initiates at an advanced stage towards discharge

mosigisyeet a piece of stick sharpened on both ends used for public executions in pre-colonial days; mo-sigis-yeet, gives the meaning, “the not of birth,” i.e., “the “reverser” of birth”; the convict was first declared to be “not of birth,” which otherwise all Kalenjiin people become through the baptism of circumcision, and then publicly executed using the “reversers’ of birth,” mosigisik (pl.)

motir pass one through a ritual, officially witness such a process

motiryoot The ceremonial witness who takes part in all rituals, assistant to the ordained priest of Asiis, **paiyoot aap tuum**; the potential priests have first to work as motireenik (plural of **motiryoot**), for long durations before they can be ordained as priests

Muguj a kin group of the Kalenjiin that is native to western Ethiopia

Munkeenik, soldier’s ceremonial gear made from the hairy black and white skin of the colobus monkey; this ornament is also used to decorate a girl on her circumcision eve: fully decorated, a girl resembles a beautiful bird and sings as sweetly as one

mur aap kaataam/murot kaataam the direction “north”

mur aap taa/murot taa the direction south

mur cross (v), dirty

muren (a) man, esp. soldier grade man,

murer girl lover, bride, wife before first childbirth

Murgaaptuuk a military regiment composed largely of the Talai men and

some other immigrants into Kipsigiisland; however, many of these immigrants chose to belong to **Kasaneet**, one of the four established military regiments of Kipsigiisland (see **poryeet**)

Murgaaptuuk one of the relatively more recent and smaller independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary; many of the Talai clan families are likely to claim membership here although **Kapchepkeendi** is generally their larger umbrella; name means “of the dark brown/black steers” which is a direct translation of the Maasai Orok Kiteng’; this fact, therefore, corroborates these people’s claim of descent from that social division of the Maasai

murot cross-wise, used in connection with compass points

muswokint-oop keelat “the expert of teeth” the traditional dentist

muswokint-oop met “the expert of head,” the head surgeons who specialised in the treatment of head injuries and diseases; they operated under the anaesthetic of alcohol (the top cream of them were and are still to be found in Marakwetland; the Abagusii are also known for this profession)

Mutei a section of the larger Keiyo people

muumeek oath, doing something that is taboo in protest, hence muumek, “turn upside down,” which is where the word comes from

muut five, smite viciously, cut up into two parts

Myoot a little-known collective name for the entire Kalenjiin nation before the so-called “final break-up” into the present sub-nationalities

nam hold, grasp!

Nandi (pronounced Naandi) the second largest of the Kalenjiin sub-ethnic groups; the Nandi chiefly inhabit Nandi County, Uasin Gishu County, but are also to be found in other counties within the Rift Valley region of Kenya, the dialect of Kalenjiin that they speak

ne miite the one who/which is present, the one in charge, prevailing

Netoroor one that is tall and massive, the exalted one, the Deity

ng'aanyemtyeet storm troops

ng'em destroy, spoil, defile

Ng'etunyo one of the four Kipsigiis hereditary military regiments; the others are: **Kebeeni**, **Kipkayge** and **Kasaneet**

Ng'iru an age sub-set of Pokoot (see under **Changen opero**)

ng'oki/ng'oogis sin, an action that could invite a curse

ng'ookto a dog

ng'woseet naturalisation, conversion, or adoption by conquest, or by choice of a non-Kalenjiin by a Kalenjiin family; same as **luuleet**

nganaseet a town, an urban area, a village that is composed of houses that are built so close together

nguuni this time, right now; may be related to Ngun, the name for Deity to some relations of the Kalenjiin in Sudan and may therefore have been an old name for the sun, so that **nguuni** (ngun-ni also nguunoon) may have meant "this sun!"

Nimur an age sub-set of Pokoot (see under **Changen opero**)

njiryoot a fish

Njogeet a court proceeding, especially a women's court, njogeet aap chepyosook,

that tried and fined men for marital abuses, incest, etc.

Njuri Ncheke the Meru presiding council of elders that is composed of the elders who have attained a saintly status, similar to the Kalenjiin poiisyek **aap boore**

nogirweet a multi-nodded tree species; a stick from this tree is carried about as a symbol of authority and wisdom by old men; the mention of it by an elder stops fighting between neighbours or relatives; **legetyeet** was the old women's counterpart of **nogirweet** as a symbol of inviolable authority

nyaanja lake

Nyangatom a kin group of the Kalenjiin that is native to western Ethiopia

nyeelweet/kenyelweet a creeper used for binding together the sacred plants during rites; is also, for its usage, sacred

Ogieek an ancient Kalenjiin-speaking people who were spread all over eastern Africa before the arrival of the modern Kalenjiin; they are now being absorbed into the larger Kalenjiin and Maasai communities as well as into neighbouring Bantu communities wherever they have been surrounded by such people, notably in Kenya's Central and Eastern regions, central and northern Tanzania, South-eastern Sudan and South-western Ethiopia; name probably means "natives" as opposed to the **Punoot**, "arrivals," "transients"; similar term used in Ethiopia (ogaw) for the older inhabitants, meaning "natives"; the Ogieek are more widely known in Kenya as the Dorobo, a Maasai nickname

oiik/aiik departed souls, spirits

oldaap iwoot the rainy season

oldaap kemei the dry season

oldimdo the rear guard of the army

oleiyo-ho! call and answer that opens and closes Kalenjiin songs; traceable back to Egypt where the Greek historian, Herodotus, in 500 BC, thought he had found the origin of the Semitic “Halleluiah!”

olobeek the Kalenjiin name for the Nubian people from Sudan; like the Kalenjiin, the Nubi are natural soldier material; they were brought from Sudan by the British to help subdue the Kalenjiin who had resisted colonisation for many years; they were given better arms and after great losses bravely taken, they finally won the war for the British, but have since retained respect for the Kalenjiin; the descendants of those Nubian soldiers are now settled in slam dwellings all over the country, notably Kibera in Nairobi, which they consider to be their “home district” in Kenya (kibera is Nubian for “forest”)

olta/olda a place, a season (see **oltoosyek**)

oltoosyek/oldoosyek seasons (plural of **olta/olda**)

Omootik a branch of the **Ogieek**

oorgoiyoot the hereditary leader or ruler, king; word is composed of: *oor*, “great” in Kalenjiin/ancient Egyptian, and *go* (*ko*) “house” in ancient Egyptian/Coptic and Kalenjiin: thus we have “great house” also styled *werkoi*, indefinite and *werkoiyoontet*, definite in Sabaoth dialect of Kalenjiin; these Nilotic royal titles are thought to have yielded many royal terms inherited by the west via Egypt (as admitted by Dutch-American Egyptologist, Henri Frankfort, 1948:236) such as Greek *arkont*, “king”; monarch (mon-arch), monarko (mon-arko/monarchos), “sole ruler”

oortanyit relationship at the larger clan level in relation to the closer level of **kootaapchii**

oraap “the path of,” also meaning “clan of” in most southern Kalenjiin dialects (see **orioop** and, **araap**)

orioop “clan of...” or “House of...,” (see **oraap/araap**)

otwoogik the servants

paagule a popular term of address between men who were initiated together in one **meenyjo**; coined from Kalenjiin *pa*, “of,” and Maasai *kule*, “milk,” because the initiates used to drink milk together from a common vessel

paatum a popular term of address between men who were initiated during the same season but not necessarily in one **meenyjo**

paiyoot or **poiyooot aap tuum** the ordained priest of Asiis; he presided over all ceremonies and collective prayer occasions

paiyoot/poiyoot aap kookweet the elder of the village council, the head of that council

paiyoot/poiyoot aap koomda another name for the priest of Asiis, **the paiyoot/poiyoot aap tuum**

par kill, raid, conquer

parak the heavens, the sky, up

pariindet killer of an enemy at war, a hero

parnotyoot a youth

pauu rule over (v.)

Peelguut the old northern “country,” **emeet**, of Kipsigiisland; probable source of name: *paleeguut*, a nickname for the warthog and the clan whose emblem is warthog “who digs with the mouth” *paleeguut*; but also said to refer to something that is so hot and scorches the mouth, i.e., *pelguut*, lit. “scorch mouth”

peergeiyaat a virgin (used of both sexes)

peet day, day time, in daylight

petuunok a single day

Pharaoh a ruler of ancient Egypt; name said to mean “large home” per-oo; but the Kalenjiin language could offer meanings as: paraa-go, “of large house”; poroor-oo, “of large ancestral House/lineage”; paraa-oo “spacious-large,” etc.

piik aap emeet “the owners of the country,” meaning the **oorgoiyoot’s** family

pir beat up

pirtiichik the inexperienced soldier corps whose role in battle was to round up the enemy’s cattle while the pick of the soldiers were engaging the enemy

pirtit a circumcised penis (here compared to the periah and birti milah circumcision terminology of the Hebrews)

pitoorik the physically indisposed, patients, those who for some reason of ritual (e.g. undergoing circumcision rites) or are in temporary ceremonial uncleanness state (such as pregnant women or those who are still under post-natal care); are allowed to break taboo such as the dietary rules that ban people from partaking of milk and meat on the same day; this rule is identical to the kosher rule of the Jews

pmonyiis (kimonyiis) of penis (See **Tulwaap Monyiis**)

pogotootik the males between their being discharged from initiation to the time of being recruited into the army; but these days refers only to the young men fresh from the circumcision camps

poiisyeek aap poryoosiek war council of elders

poiyoop sambu “the elder of the fur gown,” another name for the priest of Asiis, **paiyoot aap tuum**

Pokoot the northernmost sub-nation of the Kenya Kalenjiin, mostly inhabit West Pokot, East Pokot (part of Baringo County); a section of the Pokoot is in Uganda

Pong’omeek/Pong’oma one of the smallest branches of the Kalenjiin people, they are to be found in diminishing clusters among the Bantu people of Bungoma County and around Mt. Elgon; Bungoma County derives its name from **Pong’oma**

Pook one of the small branches of the Kalenjiin people, their native home is around Mt. Elgon, their dialect of Kalenjiin

poor succeed, prosper from property acquisition, esp. from raided livestock

poore the holy suicide of the very oldest members of a community; but also the elevation of the old to a sainthood status while still alive (see **boreet** and **keesoom meet**)

pooryo wrestle, go into combat

por raid, plunder

Porop/Poropeek a collective name for all pastoral peoples as opposed to the agricultural people who are referred to as the **Meek** (see **Meek**, **Lemeek**)

pororyeet a nation, an autonomous religious, military and administrative geographical entity within most Kalenjiin sub-nations prior to colonisation (not emphasised in pre-colonial Kipsigiisland); word is composed of *poryo*, “house” (i.e., lineage) and *oor* or *woor*, meaning “great” in northern Kalenjiin dialects and in ancient Egyptian (see Table 1) as is *oo* or *woo*; according to this argument *poryo-oor/poryo-woor* contracted to *poror*, now considered the

indefinite form of **pororyeet**; also see **poryeet** below

poryeet a military regiment; every Kipsigiis man owes allegiance to only one of four hereditary military regiments: **Ng'etunyo**, **Kipkayge**, **Kebeeni** and **Kasaneet**; word is from *poroyo*, "house" in the sense of lineage

potaa of the beginning, of before

ptaaiyaat see **Kiptaaiyaat**

pugenereek white mushrooms, an emblem to one of the Kalenjiin clans

Punoot Kalenjiin for "arrivals," "wanderers," "nomads," "transient peoples," a self-name for the latest arrivals to their present abodes in Kenya, esp.; the larger Kalenjiin sections; term excludes the Ogieek, the Sirikwa, and probably, certain northern Kalenjiin sections that have settled on their land longer; Punoot may have been the correct way to transcribe the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic form otherwise traditionally transcribed by western sources Pwenet or Punt; the Kalenjiin would occupy this **Punoot/Burgei**, as it is somewhere between east Africa and Egypt, for a time before moving on further south

purgetan to diarrhoea either as a result of stomach upset or after taking a purgative, and what a coincidence!

puunik the enemies

puureet cold season, the seventh month in the old Kipsigiis calendar (counting from **Kiptaamo**, which coincides with March in **Peelguut** of Kipsigiisland); **Puureet** coincides with September in **Peelguut** (Belgut)

Puureeti one of the four original divisions of Kipsigiisland (officially spelt Bureti); probable source of name: cold, mist and purpuureetik, vegetation that blossoms during such season

ra day, but usually heard in the form **ra-ini**, "this day"; may have originally meant the sun, hence its use as the name for Deity back in Egypt where it also meant "day"

ra-ini/ra-ni/ra-uuni/ra-uut various ways of saying "today" **ra-uut** is a Sabaoot rendering

rat bind, imprison, impede, engage (for marriage)

Reimojig one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Tanzania

riikseet an "examination" or test stage during circumcision seclusion

riip kee look after self, be careful!

Riireet a bottomless body of water, a very deep part of a body of water

rir cry

riiriin ke adjective describing a pitiful person; lit. his/her "soul cries often" (at the sight of others' misery)

Rokocho a section of the larger Keiyo people

roop arrange in line, parade in single file, tie ropes end to end to increase length

roop rain

roopeet lining up of things in a certain order, usually used of circumcision initiates who are queued up in order of the seniority of their fathers: the child of the oldest man first, who is then called **kiboreetiet**, and the child of an equally old or the second oldest man to bring up the rear: this one is called, **koyumgooi**

rootet a ceremonial procession, attending a prayer meeting, a service, the bringing of gifts to an initiate or a wedding couple or any person going through an initiation of one kind or another

rorog hurtle down from a high point, fall down from a high point

rorog moeet miscarry

Rudageing one of the small Kalenjiin-speaking clusters of Musoma, Tanzania

rumiindet murderer, confined to the killer of a fellow Kalenjiin in pre-colonial times (compare with **pariindet**)

rwai flee (plural of labat, run, flee)

saa worship, pray

Sabaoot the collective name for the Kenya side of Mt. Elgon Kalenjiin sub-ethnic groups, the dialects of Kalenjiin that they speak; one of the old names for the Kalenjiin before they dispersed from the slopes of Mt. Elgon into their present homelands

Sabiiny/Sapiiny one of the sub-ethnic groups of the Uganda Kalenjiin speaking peoples of the slopes of Mt. Elgon, their dialect of Kalenjiin; this is one of the original names by which all the Kalenjiin were known, possibly even back in Egypt where they appear to have been members of a military clan

Sach Ang'wan a point where four roads meet; the Kalenjiin, in their early wanderings, often split up into four sections when it came to the parting of ways, peacefully or acrimoniously; there are several points on Kalenjiin land which are remembered as the locations of such events and they are all called **sach ang'wan**, "branches out into four"; one of the notable **sach ang'wan** points lies somewhere between Rongai and Londiani; it is traditionally considered to be the last as this is reportedly where the Nandi, the Tugen, the Keiyo and the Kipsigiis finally split up; there have been no further splits since (however, the author believes that these were no splits as such, only gradual fanning out, i.e., in

expansion, owing to population pressure as well as to the diminishing pastureland)

sageet aap eito the sacrifice of the bull ceremony performed every fifteen years, ideally, in order to start calling a new **ibinda** (see under **seetyoot**), retire the men at arms and call to arms the younger men in waiting; the ceremony had a knock-on effect and every grown up in the society was affected as he or she was automatically promoted one social grade up: The fresh initiation graduates became the soldiers; the serving soldiers retired to become elders; the serving elders became retirees while the incumbent retirees graduated into living saints of **poore** (see **boreet**), or just committed holy mass suicide by throwing themselves off the edge of a cliff—guaranteeing themselves eternal life through reincarnation

saisai plead with, surrender

saiseet pleading with a victor to spare one

sakobei an abbreviation or a substantive form (common in Keiyo) for **sageet aap eito** sacrifice of the bull ceremony

sal kee lit. paint self, i.e. praise oneself

salanik praise names; praise songs (the suitable word for "psalms")

samburto another name for the **pirtiichik** troops

sambuut the fur gown worn by the priest of Asiis or any dignitary on ceremonial occasions

Samorr the people of central and southern Tugenland

sapteet, "podo," one of the sacred trees

Sebei the collective name for the Uganda side of Mt. Elgon sub-ethnic groups of the Kalenjiin, the dialects of Kalenjiin

that they speak, the Ugandan district that they chiefly inhabit

seetanik the portion that the **oorgoiyoot** gave to his men who were set to go on a raid; it represented his seal of approval of a raid; he smeared it on a club which the soldiers carried with them to war as a symbol of his presence and which would enable the **oorgoiyoot** to “join” them at the battlefield as he would send his “double” there to ensure their victory; not to be confused with “devils,” “demons,” **seetaanik**, the Kalenjiinised form of shetani, from Kiswahili<Arabic

seetyoot a plant that flowers every seven to eight years; two flowerings would occur within a period of fifteen years and this was the duration of the “reign” of an age-set; the second flowering of the plant signaled the end of military service for the soldiers who were serving as the **sageet aap cito** age-set cutting ceremony would soon follow and the new generation of soldiers would be ushered into service (see **sageet aap cito**)

segeeik spies

seguutyet a type of grass from which was made the **seguutyet** bracelet that was used in a manner similar to the use of the wedding ring among western people

seker cowry shell, also one of the two major sections of the Pokoot

sepetaiik pieces of gourds that were used to make necklaces to be worn by the children of the **Talai** clan

ser nose, scatter, destabilise

sere Blessed, prosperous, plenty

seruut a nose

seseet a dog

Shilling the currency of the east African states, but here refers to the Kipsigiis **Maiina** age-set’s sub-set that was

circumcised around 1923, i.e., when the shilling currency was introduced in the place of the Indian Rupee

sich give birth to, find, discover

sigiisyeet the reproduction process

sigiisyo reproduction, fertility

sigilgilyoot a stick used by women suitors when going to a prospective bride’s home on behalf of their sons; this was usually decorated with ancient symbols by girls undergoing initiation seclusion and teaching, in-mate girls also used it for communication with their sweet hearts in by-gone days during which the symbols were still understood

sigroineet/singiroineet the bachelors’ house

siimeet ululation, celebration, rejoicing

siir go yonder, come to senses (wake up), cross, jump over

simootweet one of the most sacred of the sacred trees; the mugumo of the Agikuyu people

sineet malnutrition

sinendeet a sacred vine, the laurel, a climbing plant used as wreath to honour heroes and heroines; initiates under preparation may wear it in form of a crown while those already initiated may wear it in form of a wreath; it is used here exactly as in ancient Greece—or as revived during the 2004 Athens Olympics

singiroineet/sigroineet the bachelors’ house

sir write, draw, hire labour

Sirikwa an extinct people said to have spoken a form of Kalenjiin, kept large herds of cattle, built in stone and in depressions, so much so that people now remember them as the people who lived

in holes; many Kalenjiin clans of today are descended from the Sirikwa, and to that extent it is inaccurate to describe the Sirikwa as extinct

sirit circumcision age-grade in relation to the larger age set, **ibinda**; each **ibinda** was subdivided ideally into four grades that were kept apart by four-year circumcision intervals; also a basic territorial entity that could go to war independently; an independent division of a country, especially in military terms

sirtiityet one of the sacred trees

sisiit eight

sogool nine

sogooldaiik the party of nine scouts that symbolically led the soldiers marching to battle

sombeet a military head gear, usually made of ostrich feathers and a lion's mane

somok three

sooi lowlands, grassland

soongooliet an ostrich plume

soosimo processional prayers for rain

soosyoot a palm tree, a branch of it used for cleaning gourds

Soot one of the four original divisions of Kipsigiisland; probable source of name: may have something to do with the term "easterners" as this is also a name for the Tugen who approached their land from the east; another name for the **Kipasiiseek** clan which was probably dominant in **Soot** earlier on

sop survive, be alive, live

Sor a Mt. Elgon, Uganda side, Kalenjiin sub-ethnic group that falls under the collective designation, Sebei, of Sebei District, Uganda

sorooryet a dove (see **cheptuugeet**)

sosom thirty

soteet a calabash

suiyoot a wolf; the Wolf City of ancient Egypt retains the old name **Suiyoot** in the corrupted form Asyut

Suk the general name for the Pokoot during the colonial times; comes from **Sook** or **Chook**, one of the two major sections of the Pokoot

supeereet a soldier's ration bag

suuswoot a blade of grass, a lot of grass

syeeet a co-wife

taaiileel good omen

taaitta a first-born child

taam lie, mislead

taaparaaryet a wild plant from which was obtained fibre for weaving food bowls and strainers; similar in most applications to the papyrus back in Egypt

taapteet a flower

taapurpuuryet a butterfly

taarusyeek circumcision inmates

taiyweet the partridge, was the emblem of Kaamwaige, a family that once rose to supreme leadership in Nandi according to some accounts

talaalda a cheetah

talaasyeet gentleness, genteel behaviour and outlook

Talai/Talaeek a Kalenjiin clan whose emblem is lion, especially among the central Kalenjiin; members of this clan are generally descended from successive dynasties of the **oorgooik**, the hereditary rulers, as well as from the laibon

hereditary rulers of Maasailand who are also of the Lion clan of the Maasai

taman ten

tamirmiiryet a shadow, a spirit

tap women's equivalent of the men's **araap**; it is a contraction of **tie aap**, "daughter of" or "girl of"

tapsiiniet a leather string

tariit bird

tarteet an omen

Tatoog/Tatooga/Datoga a Tanzanian branch of the Kalenjiin, sometimes the term is used to refer collectively to the Tanzanian Kalenjiin

Taturu a major Tanzanian Kalenjiin-speaking group that is rapidly getting itself submerged into a Bantu neighbourhood that it at first influenced a great deal

ta-tuun it will come to pass, in future

tauneet the beginning

tebees wide, broad

tebesweet a tree with broad leaves, it is one of the sacred trees

teegaat a bamboo plant or its stalk, a place full of bamboo plants

tegen/tigen eat sparingly to save (in Arroor)

tegeryoot an individual who was born after the sibling he or she immediately followed had died; immediately after being born he or she was taken out and exposed to dangers such as being placed at the mouth of a hyena's hole, or in more recent times, placed on the road or on rails, for a split moment as an unwanted child; he or she was thereafter given an unattractive name, which always brought back memory of the "dumping"; this way, the evil eye who caused the death of the preceding sibling,

or siblings, would not be interested in the baby, for the evil-eyed one would not take unwanted babies who bore ugly names! Many **tegeryoot** men (**tegeriisyek** pl.) carried women's names for this reason, the assumption being that the evil eye would be even less interested in them

teleleet its manner of standing, the standing

tepii stay, remain

tepuutyoo question (noun)

Terik one of the smallest of the Kalenjiin sub-ethnic groups who chiefly inhabit the south of Nandi County, the dialect of Kalenjiin that they speak

Tetagaat the third wave of initiates, after **chonginieek**, and **kiptaru**, to be circumcised following the commencement of an age-set, **ibinda**; ideally, the **Tetagaat** were initiated from the ninth to the twelfth year since the beginning of the **ibinda**

tie girl

tigen groan in the manner of someone ill

tiliil holy, clean

Tiping'ot one of the ancient major independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as "clans" as they are hereditary

tiptem twenty

tiriren fly (v.)

tisap seven

toiityo after that..., and then...

Toiyoi another name for the power behind thunder and lightning, **Iilat**; the clan name for the people whose emblem is rain, thunder/lightning/, **Ileet**, or soldier ants, **pireechik**; many of the original artisan families belong to this clan

toroor massive and high, elevated, exalted

Toroorut/Toroorot one of the names for Asiis, the Deity to the Kalenjiin, especially among the northern sections of Kalenjiin, means “the exalted,” “the on high,” “the heavens,” from toroor, tall and massive”

toror a women’s movement that aims to alleviate the suffering of one of their lot through donations carried out in a ceremonial manner; the **toror** women also bring gifts on happier occasions such as during the weddings that involve their children; **toror** seems to be a new innovation which spread like bush-fire in Kipsigiisland; the manner of execution and the basic tunes and beats of the **toror** songs appear and sound ancient and may be steeped in some by-gone custom although there is frequent mention of Cheeiso, “Jesus,” Jehovah, or **Cheptaleel**, the preferred Catholic rendering of the same; **eit-aap muget**, the ancient ceremony that elevated individual aged people to a saintly status, seems to be the inspiration of **toror** especially considering that **toror**, means to “elevate”

tororyeet the final “tying of the knot” ceremony that was performed for old couples, if they could afford its expenses; it was limited to a man and his first wife (tentatively speaking, this ceremony seems to have been unique to the Kipsigiis)

toweett a last-born child

Tto/Ddo the part of Egypt that the Kalenjiin believe their ancestors came from; it apparently translates approximately to the present-day Abusir in Egypt which used to be called **Tto** in ancient times

Tuch cover, hide

tugeen cover with...

tugeenyuu the Tugen are said to have referred to each other, neighbour to neighbour, as **tugeenyuu**, “my cover,” because of their joint defence strategy, hence the name Tugen; Tugen is one of the least controversial of Kalenjiin sub-ethnic names as to etymology, and almost all theories gravitate around keeping, or hiding, something or a people from misuse or from enemies; the same, with similar meaning, is found in Coptic and in hieroglyphic texts

Tugen one of the largest sub-nations of the Kalenjiin, their dialects of Kalenjiin; mostly inhabit Baringo and Nakuru counties (see **tugeenyuu**)

Tugen one of the relatively more recent and smaller independent divisions (**pororyoosiek**) of Nandi country, now loosely referred to as “clans” as they are hereditary (not to confuse with Tugen, one of the larger Kalenjiin sub-ethnic communities; however, the Tugen **pororyeet** of Nandi was founded by immigrants from the greater Tugen country)

Tulwaap Kipsigiis another way of saying **Tulwaap Sigiis**, but which version is not supported as much as the latter by historical facts

Tulwaap Koony the “Mountain of the Koony”; The Kalenjiin name for Mt. Elgon

Tulwaap Laagoi “the hill of children,” one of the euphemisms for **Tulwaap Monyiis**

Tulwaap Monyiis “The hill of Penises,” the Hill of Circumcision, the rather obscene true name of **Tulwaap Sigiis**; it is likened here to the biblical Hill of Foreskins, Araloth or Gilgal (Joshua 5:1–9)

Tulwaap Ng’eetiik “the hill of the uncircumcised,” one of the euphemisms for **Tulwaap Monyiis**

Tulwaap Sigiis “the hill of birth,” a hill near the Londiani junction of the Nakuru-Kericho road, named so because of the fertility rite of circumcision that used to take place there; its other names are: **Tulwaap Monyiis**; **Tulwaap Laagoi**; **Tulwaap Ng’etiik**

tulweet a hill, a mountain

Tumeiywo a section of the larger Keiyo people

tup bury, not disclose something, e.g.; the assets or liabilities of a deceased, which is an unspeakable taboo act

туруr moet abort a pregnancy deliberately

tuug aap muget the fine in form of cattle paid by the **koot aap chii** of the slayer to the family of the victim

tuug-aap laboot “the cattle of laboot” the fruit of the Sodom’s apple plant, **labotweet**

tuugeeng’woong’ your voice

Tuumdaap laakweet the feast that formally welcomes the baby to the world and into the family, held about four months after its birth and the **kiing’eet Asiis** ceremony

tuumdo a ritual, any of the positive rituals (also see **tuumiin**)

tuumiin the physical location of or any of the Kalenjin ceremonies performed for the purpose of promoting individuals, or groups of them, to the next senior social grade: any promotion to the next higher grade was regarded a birth into it, hence **tuum**, lit. “give birth”

tuun a word that can mean “the past” or “the future”

utaat “is intelligent,” “is sharp”

utotyeeet mental sharpness, intelligence

Waaldai one of the four original divisions of Kipsigiisland (for probable origin of name see **Aldai/Waaldai**)

Waaldai/Aldai the western section respectively of the original Kipsigiis and Nandi settlements; said to come from “right turn!” or “change right” or “change direction,” which was in reference to the old custom of turning back due east little if one had given the appearance of migrating westwards; the direction west was associated with decline and death in the manner of the setting sun; for this reason dead bodies were dumped or buried to the west of homes and strictly as the sun set or even after it had set, but never when it was in the process of ascending to the sky, i.e.; before midday

wal change(v.)

wero “son of,” used in place of **araap** among some northern Kenya Kalenjin communities such as the Pokoot and the Merkweeta

werpotie koyoop Keiyo “son of girl to come from Keiyo” some proverbial figure who will come to rescue any suffering Nandi person and punish his or her real or perceived persecutor; this saviour is expected to come from Keiyo; a Nandi person under real or perceived persecution often pronounces this threat of retaliation to the person thought responsible

yeetan taboo, yetanaiik (pl.)

yotiik advance party of spies

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The Misiri Legend Explored



How can a black people, who do not even profess to Islam, claim to have originated from Egypt, which is such an Arabic and Islamic geographical setting? But the Kalenjiin people of Kenya have held on fast to a tradition that their ancestors in antiquity were part of ancient Pharaonic Egypt, which they variously call Tto and Misiri. As unlikely as it may sound, the persistence in keeping this oral tradition alive does not seem to be dying with time and distance from the claimed place of origin.

The Misiri Legend Explored: A Linguistic Inquiry into the Kalenjiin People's Oral Tradition of Ancient Egyptian Origin establishes the Kalenjin oral tradition of Misirian origin on the basis of linguistic evidence—a genuine tool which Egyptology scholars and researchers need to have relied on much more to bring greater and more final results to their investigations. Students of ancient Egypt willing to accept that there is an irrational prejudice against the concept of ancient black African ingenuity will upgrade their stock of knowledge regarding ancient Egypt with the numerous discoveries laid out here. They will discover a powerful new tool for their trade in the form of the African languages and cultures that now lie South of the Sahara.

Kipkoech araap Sambu holds a doctorate in Ancient Near Eastern Studies from the University of South Africa (D.Litt. et Phil, 2001); a professional membership of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (MCIPS, UK, 1983); and a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Nairobi (1979). He did practical work in Egyptology as a guest student at Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany (2002/3). He is a member of the International Association of Egyptologists and runs Kass FM and Kass TV— the Kalenjiin language medium stations – from Washington, DC.

“This is a pioneering work that brings to light much new knowledge about the past and it ought to instigate educationists to embark on a major revision of the East African school syllabi...

.....It contributes towards restoration of the African pride by bringing to the African the hidden and suppressed information on his illustrious past, his historical achievements and primary contribution to science, technology, and world religion: all at the founding base of what has gradually become modern civilization in general.”

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ISBN 978-9966-792-14-3



University of Nairobi Press

ISBN 978-9966-792-14-3



9 789966 792143